Disrupting Authority: The Phenomenality of Antioppressive Education in the Arts

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Karen and David Babulski, who passed before it could be completed but whose love made it possible.

Boldly go.

Abstract

The effort to engage in critical pedagogy is often stymied by several factors: institutional or systemic authority acting in opposition to anti-oppressive teaching, a lack of opportunities for students to develop and use personal agency, and the structures within disciplinary discourses and curricula that limit the possibility of social change. In order to begin to understand the ways that antioppressive pedagogies might manifest in the arts, I have assembled a series of personal narratives interspersed with and connected to potential definitions of authority, exploration of philosophy stances around authority, and speculation on the phenomenality of authority and its disruption.

Drawing from post-intentional phenomenology (Vagle, 2014) and narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), this study attempts to reconcile structural and agentic approaches. By placing the poststructural philosophy of Deleuze & Guattari (1987) in dialog with critical (Freire, 1970/2000; Kumashiro, 2015) and post-critical pedagogies (Lather, 1995), I have been able to explore my lived-experience of authority as that which defers or denies student authorship. I have further explored a Deweyan approach to expression as I endeavored to live out the promise of using disruptiveness as a pedagogical tool for instigating student authorship. The resultant text is an assemblage that explores the complex, partial, shifting, multiple, tentative, and sometimes contradictory manifestations of authority and authorship. Through the selective use of voice, typeface, color, and illustration, this layered multivocality creates a palimpsest (Dillon, 2007) that progressively narrows, not to certainty, but to the present moment.

Results of this study do not support causality or claim to raise test scores and close achievement gaps. Instead, this work underscores the importance of teachers' critical reflections on their practice and the long-term benefits for students and society that such reflexivity allows. Teachers and teacher candidates who are able to examine their own education and to understand the relationship between student authorship and the manner in which authority is taken up will be primed to create pedagogical spaces in which students are not merely the recipients of knowledge but the authors of their own phenomenality. In this way, teachers who allow their authority to be disruptive and disrupted acknowledge students as the complex fully-realized beings they are and erase the false distinction between being-schooled and being-in-the-world.

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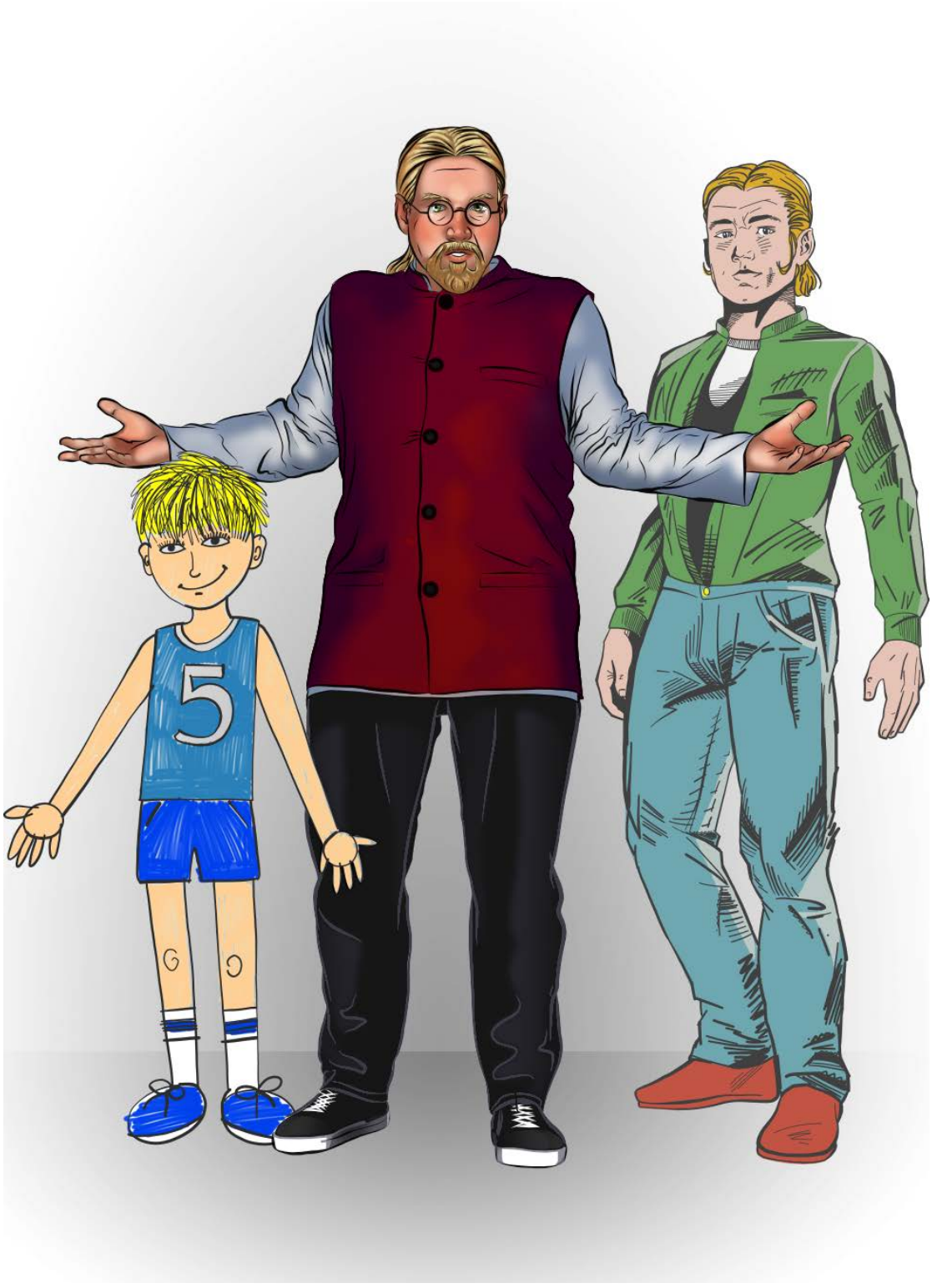

Figure 1. Triple self-portrait, digital ink and paint, 2016.
Drawing and coloring style are adapted from drawings completed at age 5(1983), 37 (2015), and 17 (1996). Shirt color indicates preferred color at given ages and matches in-text footnotes.

Chapter One: Authoring Experience

Let me tell you a story.

I was fifteen when I first remembered what I had forgotten for a decade[1].

It was not a spontaneous recollection, or even solely my own[2], but a product of hearing my own life's story told with someone else's voice. It was the Winter holidays and, for the first time in a year and the last time for several years, the family was back together. Katrina had come down from Wisconsin. Tamara had returned from her first stint as a history teacher down in Baxley, Georgia. My father was back in town from a training session in Texas and he'd even wrangled a promise from his boss that the technicians he was training would be the ones flying in for the next few sessions.

There was an air of reminiscence as we turned on the record player and listened to the Muppets Christmas Carol LP. We brought up all manner of memories, of Christmases

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[1] It was the place where the St. Croix widened out before taking a dog-leg left on its path to join the Mississippi. There, at the western fringes of the choppy blue-green water of Lake St.Croix, was a sandy expanse that stretched from nearly the Catholic Church down to St. Mary's Point. The waves would roll upon the pebbled beach with wind-driven frenzy, carrying with them a metallic scent. Boats ploughed through the waves from south to the north, leaving foamy furrows on the turquoise water. Above the water, the fleecy clouds limned the horizon of a sky that climbed into ultramarine and indigo, impossibly blue and beautiful.

[2] Or, perhaps, even true.

past, relationships that had lasted across distances and over years, and of friendships that had, sadly, faded away. We spoke about how much the little town of Snellville had changed while my sisters were away and how it compared to where they found themselves. Without quite intending to we found ourselves talking about the places the family had lived: the apartment in California where Tamara had spent her first years, the little green house on Quarry Avenue where Katrina and I spent ours, the blue-grey house on the edge of a horse farm in Hudson where, we all agreed, we had stayed too briefly.

It was Katrina who asked the question, "Do you remember river-boat-beach-water?"

I did not.

And then she began to describe it: the corner store with the shopkeeper who always thought we were stealing candy, the beach that was a short walk from our house and the old woman that always yelled at us when we would walk past her yard. There was the series of three hills we had to climb on the way and the spot where the tall grass gave way to the gravelly sand and where we would leave our bikes and our shoes.

I had been three or four years old for most of it. Perhaps I had gone to the corner store and been yelled at for looking too longingly at the nickel jars of candy. It seemed like a thought on the verge of being remembered. Perhaps I had gone up three hills and down to the water only to be too scared to get close to the waves. Maybe there had been an old woman who was upset that we were loud and who carefully guarded her yard from the

damage we would obviously do by walking on it[3].

And then I remembered— but not about "river-boat-beach-water," the beach, or the corner store. What I remembered was the last time I had seen Lake St. Croix and how Tamara, Katrina and I were squeezed into the car, how their legs rubbed against mine and how there was never quite enough air. The old green station wagon with the fake wood sides would have been better. But my father had determined the Country Squire wasn't needed any longer[4] It was then ten years old, rusty, and unreliable. Besides, another family needed it more[5]. We could get by, we were told, with all five of us in the slightly more-reliable and

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[3] It seemed right. I could tell that this was not simply a piece of fiction, but what *must-have-been*. The strange thing was this: the more she spoke about things I didn't remember, the more that I began to remember them, but it was also like hearing your own voice recorded for the first time. It was you, but somehow it wasn't. The perspective was all wrong. That was actually what made it seem truer, that I didn't remember things exactly as she did.

[4] The old Ford station wagon was a symbol of my mother's independence, the vehicle that she used to go to and from her work at the bank and to just get out of the house from time to time. It was also a direct tie to her maternal duty, bought around the time Katrina was born and in recognition that an old VW Beetle just wasn't a family car in the way an avocado green and fake-wood paneled station wagon obviously was.

[5] Getting rid of that station wagon was a "family decision" that was made entirely by my father. Whenever money was tight, this seemed to happen.

marginally less-rusted 1980 Plymouth Champ[6]: mom and dad in the front, three kids in the back. In the station wagon, we would have been spread out— Tamara on the back bench and either Katrina or me in what we called the "way-back." In the much-smaller Champ, the way-back wasn't actually way back and, while I had been able to fit in the trunk when I was four[7], I could no longer fit now that I was five. I would ride pillion[8], my sisters on either side of me.

It was this arrangement of seats that was so important. As my parents watched the road ahead, they faced the future. Tamara sat to my left, her head craned to try and see the town of Stillwater through the teal painted steel girders of the old truss bridge to the north. Katrina sat on my right. As we came up to the bridge her view held all of Lake St. Croix and the wooded shore that was Wisconsin. Upon the bridge, she could see the span of the lake down to where the water narrowed and turned westward to again become the St. Croix River.

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[6] I'm not sure why I feel compelled to tell a story about the words that were spoken during a car trip by devoting so many words to the cars themselves. There is a part of me convinced that leaving them out would be telling the story with no setting. Surely the interior of the car was more central to what happened than to the land we drove through. The land was mere scenery. In this case, the setting directly affected what happened; had we been in the station wagon, the story probably could not be told.

[7] And a half.

[8] Or "ride bitch" as Tamara never let my mother know she called it.

"Do you remember…" Katrina started, and then asked, "What was it Feefer[9] called the lake?"

"River-boat-beach-water," supplied Tamara.

"That's right!" exclaimed my father with his infectious and overabundant enthusiasm, "River, boat, beach, water!"

"No," said Tamara, "all together. River-boat-beach-water. Like it's one word."

"That's right," said my mother, "That's how he said it: one word."

"Did not," I interjected.

"Yes, you did, dear," insisted my mother, "After you were sick when you were two, the doctors told us that you might not walk again or talk again. And when you did, that's how you talked."

"Yeah," Tamara added, "like you were listing off everything you could see all at once."

"Did not," I insisted, more quietly this time[10].

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[9] I had received the name Feefer because I had spent several years being babysat by a family with a daughter who could not pronounce the voiceless dental fricative in my name. Timothy became Timofee or just Fee, which the girl's father changed to Feefer, which in the hands of my own father became Feefer-Donald, which became a source of embarrassment for years to come.

[10] I *knew* it was called St. Croix Beach. I *knew* that the river, the beat, the boats, and the water were all their own things. I wouldn't have said it like that. I didn't. Not *me*.

"You did too[11]," said Katrina, "We all remember it. River-boat-beach-water."

"River-boat-beach-water!" my father repeated, laughing.

I watched my mother's eyes flick up to see my pouting expression. She reached back to awkwardly hold my hand, squeezing just a little too hard. "It's okay, dear," she said, "It was cute."

"Yeah, kiddo," Tamara said with her hand on my shoulder, "It was cute[12]."

It came to me like that, over the crooning sounds of John Denver, a clear memory of those few minutes in the car with my family as we moved from one state to another. All Katrina had said was, "Do you remember river-boat-beach-water?" And still, I did not[13]. But I could well remember the crowdedness of the back seat and the sullen resentment of my five-year old self[14]. Very suddenly, as if the echo of that emotion was the opening of a once-locked door, I could feel the heat of the sun and the coolness of the breeze, smell the tang of salt and

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[11] Did not.

[12] Then why are they making fun of me? It's not cute. It's stupid.

[13] At least, not directly. But there was something in the story that seemed so familiar. It was like humming a half-remembered song and then hearing it on the radio. Suddenly it was like you had never forgotten what you couldn't remember. But you also couldn't be sure you knew the words until you heard them being sung. It was my memory, but it was incomplete and imperfect, with all the little gaps filled in by my family.

[14] Was not.

sand, and see the most impossibly beautiful blue. It may be that I began to dream, using the received narrative to inquire about and understand lived experience,[15] reflexion causing it to become more real in my imagination than what once was real. Yet, I seemed to remember the sensation and not the story, a primacy of the aesthetic over the strictly rational. My emergent memory was embodied, not merely cognized[16].

In my sisters' and parents' memories, it was the story and not the embodied experience of it that was central. I ran the words together, "river-boat-beach-water" as if I had created a compound word, a lexeme from the amalgamation of parts that stood for something distinct and precise. To my family this was more than a moment of hyphenated

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[15] Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that "narrative inquiry is the study of experience, and experience, as John Dewey taught, is a matter of people in relation contextually and temporally. Participants are in relation, as we researchers are in relation to participants. Narrative inquiry is an experience of the experience. It is people in relation studying with people in relation" (p. 189).

[16] The notion that memory is cognition that cannot be situated in relation to the body and the physical world echoes the Cartesian understanding of the mind as separate from the body. Episodic memory, however, is grounded is in lived experience and relies on the ability to perceive a spatiotemporally distant reality as an immediate one. This disruption of Cartesian duality is bolstered by findings that "even highly abstract mental concepts may be rooted, albeit in an indirect way, in sensory and motoric knowledge" (Wilson, 2002).

naming, it was something of a triumph. Having not spoken since being hospitalized as a two-year-old, having been reset to infancy, I had been rebooted like a computer and then forced to learn to walk and talk anew. And there it was, one of the first instances of coherent speech, an indication that there was still a mind behind the stillness and the silence, "river-boat-beach-water."

In my own memory, it was the shadowy semblance of a self I no longer was, an inscription of meaning that was meaningful when I was three and embarrassingly meaningless when I was five. To my fifteen-year-old self, it was an important moment, the first time that I had been prompted to recall in clarity the physicality of existing as some other being, myself but not my current self. What I meant to say, as my adult mind would have it, is that this bundle of remembered sensation was the place in the river between the boats and the beach where all there was was water, where the clouds danced their reflections in the waves and the air held both the wintry smell of sand and salt and the heady heat of summer.

Introduction to The Current Study

I have had been interested in how the world is variously spoken into being since I was a child of six or seven. What began as a niggling but ill-defined discomfort with the disconnect between the world and our collective story of it, soon became a source of sadness. As a student, I found myself and my story denied by those who did not like to hear it and overwritten by those who would rather speak other stories into existence. I felt that my brain was afire— injustice and impropriety transmuted into inspiration— but that I was held back from the doing of anything, not because I lacked the necessary skills to act or the will to do so boldly, but because to allow any one student to disrupt the usual

ways of being would only encourage others to be disruptive. As a teacher, I settled into a set of pedagogies that I believed would impel my students to take up art as a way to resist the omnipresent conformity that I felt had so poisoned my own school experience.

Drawing on Piaget (Slavin, 2014) and synectics (Gordon, 1961/2015), my first goal was to bring them, willingly or not, to an awareness of the limitations of their own perception. I believed that by demonstrating the inherent inadequacy of their schemata— by making the familiar strange in ways that could be neither rationalized nor ignored— I could compel my students to reject what is *ought* in favor of what actually *is*. As a teacher, I was— and as I write I remain— sensitive to the notion that beneath an assumptive world must lie a world of reality that extends beyond the life space of the individual to include all things. The disjunction between *ought* and *is*— between noumenon and phenomenon—is predicated on the existence of this expansive, partially imperceptible, and inevitably unknowable *is*. As an art teacher, however, I came to conclude that the existence of the real is moot; the purpose of expanding student perception could not be to correct conceptions of the world, rather the purpose should be to complicate and add to existing schemata. A teacher who reifies only what *is* forgets that the worlds of lived experience and all codifications of that experience in the form of philosophy, theory, and curricula are partial and shifting manifestations of an assumptive world (Parkes, 1971). At best, the art teacher can only offer students access to competing *oughts* of differing sophistication and complexity derived from their own singular apprehension of the world.

Although it seems contradictory to the ideal of making student schemata more complete and replete, I found that I had to honor students lived experience as the source of understanding and not, as is still too often the case, as a barrier to it (cf. Darling-Hammond, 2006). Critical awareness of the limitations of their assumptive world was not enough; without access to a more sophisticated, nuanced, or complex conception of the world students would experience criticality as a trauma and reject the new awareness in favor of earlier conceptions. My first attempts at illustrating the limitations of the mind fell into this trap: many of my students would not believe that color operated in more complex ways, for example, because their assumptive world did not require and could not accommodate that complexity. I quickly realized that teaching to the complexity of the lived world required that I simultaneously teach my students the concrete skills to explore this newly complicated world and provide them with the emotional support to overcome the trauma of losing an assumptive world of which they were once so sure.

Were I to fail in supporting them or to promote only my assumptive world, the certainty of my voice would silence the world they might otherwise speak into being; I would become no better than the teachers I so despised as a child. That sort of singular, exclusionary, and monologic practice might be defined in Freirean terms as an antidialogical conquest in which the teacher "imposes his own contours on the vanquished, who internalize this shape and become ambiguous beings 'housing' another" (Freire, 2000/1970, p. 138). What I was attempting to do was something different. In phenomenological terms, I was asking students to attend to their intentional relations with and in the world and, by developing increasingly complex and complicated mental

machinery, to strengthen both their intentionality and their awareness of the interconnectedness of being that is continually present in those relations. This emergence into a world of relations of which students were always— albeit not always consciously— present required a new learning process that disrupted the usual subject-object dichotomy and allowed students to "rethink their assumptions in action" (Freire, 2000/1970, p. 108). Although I began my teaching career thinking that I could coerce students into embracing an enhanced current perception over a flawed past conception, I came to realize the naïveté of disentangling lived-experience of the world from the world itself. By the time I was interning for my Master's, I no longer felt the need for students to arrive at specific understandings, but, having complicated their experience and implicated them as authors of their own reality, could be content that we— teacher and students— were making progress as "people together seeking out reality" (p. 108).

Shortly after I earned my Master's degree, and having spent the bulk of my time formalizing and expanding on these early pedagogical moves, I was asked to step in for an art teacher who had been placed on involuntary medical leave just a few days after the start of the school year. I entered that classroom as a stranger, having replaced their *real* teacher in my new students' minds, and with the knowledge that I need only serve in that classroom for twenty consecutive class days before I would be granted a contract and replace their old teacher in reality.

It was to be a month-long audition in which I was supposed to elevate students' subject-area knowledge to the point that they would be successful on a common mid-term exam and reclaim a class that the school administration was ready to remove from the

schedule. Here were students who had been ill-served by their teacher's untimely— and unwilling— exit from the classroom. I cannot speak to whether they were ill-taught when their former teacher was present, but they had few grades, no recorded assessments, and very little evidence they had produced anything. They were unfamiliar with the creative process, modes of perception, surface techniques, material safety, theories of color, canons of proportion, æsthetics, and critique. They had little knowledge of art history, less understanding of cultural production, and mostly saw no value in remedying the lack of either. It seemed that they had been spending their time in an art class in which art— whether individually or discursively produced— did not matter.

Within that month, I was given two and a half weeks in which I had to instill nine weeks of technique, practice, and knowledge to a group of young people who were entirely uninterested in either seeing or doing art and who actively resisted refining their perception and skill. Through conversation, I discovered that they were taking up and embodying the philosophy of their former teacher: art is individual and subjective and no one can say what is good and bad. After that conversation, I remember coming home and telling my wife that, "my little angels think they can just shit on the page and then still expect an A." I knew that it would take weeks and months of working with students to undo the damage that philosophy had wrought: days of exploring the creative process, weeks of skill-building and of training perception, hour upon hour of attention to visual culture, and a consistent and sensible system of assessment that would reward the exercise of creativity and the development of skill. I simply did not have the time, however.

At the direction of the department chair and the principal, I found myself, for the first

time in my teaching career, required to teach the *subject* and not the *students*. I was told that I must quickly establish my authority and then leverage that authority, to get them "up to snuff." Doing so required teaching in ways that I found to be intellectually distant, philosophically dissonant, and emotionally unsatisfying. I could not create experiences during which my students might move closer to profound understandings but had to write lessons that would require students to be able to demonstrate particular skills and reiterate discrete bits of information. Even then, lessons could not spring from student experience or address their interests and concerns, but had to promote the formalism of Modern art— as chosen by the department and the visual arts PLC— as well as teaching the narrowly prescribed ways of being and seeing that Modernism supports. Each day became more daunting rather than less and each student product more damning. Looking at their work, I felt no pride in them or myself, no matter their improvement or their apparent mastery. I realized that I was allowing my own personal and professional judgment to be supplanted with that of a distant curricular authority— and all for a chance at a job that politics and the pocketbook dictated would likely never be mine.

This study began to take shape in that moment of profound dissatisfaction, as I began to grapple with the disjunction of being true to my artistic and pedagogical beliefs and yet having to teach creativity, æsthetics, and artistic production in conformist, antidialogic, and culturally irrelevant ways. It caused me to attend to my core beliefs and— through Dewey— to rediscover my own personal pedagogic creed. In looking for answers to what seemed an immediate and recent problem, I recognized myself as the student I once was in the teacher I was still struggling to become. Over the course of my

time in schools— as a student, as a teacher, and as an academic— I have produced a wealth of empirical materials as I have sought to engage with and understand my situated and embodied reactions to educational injustice. These materials— consisting of journal entries, notes, case studies, visual art, poetry, narrative, as well as lesson plans and assessments— allow me to re-author my lived experience of authority and its disruption, not merely of the events but of the embodied phenomenality I encountered in multiple contexts and across time.

Creative Assemblage

On Phenomenology

I have conceptualized my approach to this study as auto-phenomenological. In order to avoid thinking *of* and writing *about* the disruption of authority as a distal phenomenon— experienced by others and related to the researcher through interviews and texts— I determined that it might be possible to write *through* lived experience, not simply of the phenomenon, but of the shifting situated-ness and contextual complexity of being multiple in relation to the phenomenon's various, contested, and partial manifestations. By embracing this attitude of lived through-ness (Vagle, 2014; Vagle, Clements & Coffee, 2016; Van Manen, 2014) I aim to make the past temporally, spatially, and metaphorically present by employing particular æsthetic and poetic methods of authoring a text that might vocatively speak or sing the text (e.g., Merleau-Ponty, 1973) into an immanent relation with the reader.

While I am interested in bettering my understanding of the phenomenon, I cannot claim that I am interested in defining or delimiting the disruption of authority as a thing-

in-itself; rather, I am interested in exploring how the phenomenon might manifest in multiple contexts, across time, and as interpreted through the continually changing intentional relationship of the non-unitary self with and in the world. Additionally, I am wary of the idea that themes might "emerge" from the process of constructing narrative. Rather than adopt the pretense that any *a posteriori* matter is emergent in self-evident action from the data, I reject the reductionism— and the de-centering of the researcher as the agent of reduction— in favor of a Deleuzoguattarian examination of rhizomatic intensities and exploration of possible lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Rather than seek themes that might appear to emerge from a text or set of empirical materials, I am interested in exploring shifting understandings that are actively produced in the inter-subjective dialogic action between researcher, texts, and reader and embedded within the contexts of that production.

In keeping with my distaste for the fixedness and determinism of a thematic approach to textual production and analysis, I am similarly unpersuaded by the dictum of Husserlian phenomenology that the researcher should engage in *epoché* by bracketing their *a priori* understandings and attitudes about and towards the phenomenon to arrive at an *a priori* essence (Husserl, 1913/2014). If, as I have ventured, that all we can know is the continually situated and contextualized awareness of our own lived experience as a being-in-the-world, *Dasein,* it is not necessary to arrive at any singular phenomenological essence. This holds whether essence is defined as an invariant structure found by "turning to the things themselves" (Husserl, 1913/2014), is manifest through the intentional relationship (e.g., Heidegger, 1927/2008), or is multistable (Ihde, 1993, 2010).

While both Heidegger and Ihde acknowledge the importance of recognizing the evolution of the self over time, I am concerned that the idea of a multistable phenomenon still roots any perceived variation in the context, the discourse, and the individual such that each individual experiences a stable phenomenon within each discrete and arbitrary moment of intentional awareness. The idea of an evolving self experiencing phenomenon differently over time has its origins in nineteenth century philosophy (e.g., historicism of Hegelian and Marxist thought in Popper, 1945/2013) and suggests that there is a continuous albeit incremental moving towards a complete understanding of the phenomenon or a moving away from the-thing-itself and our prereflective and prepredicative awareness of experience.

I embrace the post-intentional directive that phenomenological work "cannot start with the stable subject and try to follow that subject's intending toward and with the world" (Vagle, 2014, p.112), and instead look to other possibilities that might destabilize subjectivity and complicate intentionality. I draw upon the feminist critique of humanist and empirical thought (eg., Bloom, 1996; Clark, 1999) and utilize the concept of the nonunitary self to address subjectivity. In this conception, the self does not merely change over time but is inherently fragmentary, complicated, and partial. Self-contradictory thoughts do not have to be resolved down to a singular rational conclusion, but might be explored and expanded upon using both rational and non-rational means. The nonunitary self, as something continually made and unmade, cannot be disembodied in Cartesian fashion, but always exists in relation with the world as it is experienced and as it is perceived, remembered and reflected upon.

A second possibility might be inferred from Derrida's use of *différance* (eg., 1978) as both differentiation and deferral in the reading of a text. If we take the experiential world as a text that can be read, Derrida's formulation would have us paying attention, not just to how a singular phenomenon might be described, but to how our changing mental state would also change how we perceive the phenomenon from instant to instant. Were this the limit of Derrida's writing around *différance*, we might be drawn into the concept of the multistable self.

Différance also allows for a reading that is deferred by being temporally removed or indefinitely postponed from the phenomenon, however. Our mental apparatus does not merely exist as a step-wise progression of distinct states but in a state of constant and continuous, albeit non-linear, reciprocating, and recursive change. Therefore, while phenomena are lived in-the-moment, our understanding of one phenomenon is deferred both by the shifting relationships amongst phenomena and by the fragmentation of our intentionality. We do not leap from epiphany to epiphany in which each instant of experience is a moment of apprehension— where, having understood, we stop. Nor are we simply positioned by discourses of which we are the unwitting inheritors. Instead, we are constantly reflecting, perceiving, and predicting with and in the world, embracing and rejecting discourse through rational and non-rational means, and always in the midst of assembling our own nascent subjectivity as we seek to comprehend our deferred lived-thoroughness of the intended phenomenon.

For this study, I have also embraced a third possibility that allows playing with both subjectivity and intentionality. Writ large, traditional phenomenology could be

conceived as the account of a researcher's perception of other people's experience— the need for multiple participants is rooted in the idea of essence, and *epoché* is required to allow the researcher to objectively triangulate across individual accounts to arrive at a fixed, stable core of what is known through the experience of itself. In this model of phenomenology, interview is not merely the preferred method, but is one of the only avenues for describing or interpreting the phenomenon; the researcher must be grounded in the empirical yet cannot rely on their own lived experience. To move away from phenomenology as interview and locate the researcher within the study, I look to Haug (1999) and collective memory work for generating and collating a body of empirical materials. By drawing from various sources and processing the extant texts to create narrative that, in turn, might be analyzed, I sought to move from transcription and recollection towards inscription and the reconstitution of lived experience.

This does not imply that other voices are not informative or that other bodies do not contribute to the lived through-ness; rather, doing memory work allows the construction of the text as a heteroglossia that contains "another's speech in another's language" (Bahktin, 1934/1982) as "refracted" through authorial intention. If the self is not singular and fixed, however, but both multifaceted and multiple, it follows that authorial intention is not singularly refracted but is complicated by the fragmented prism of the non-unitary self and implicated in the various tentative manifestations of the phenomenon. Authoring a text that intends to the continual becoming of the self as a multiply-voiced "artistic reworking" of remembered lived through-ness, disrupts the inner-outer dichotomy of "double-voiced" prose, and allows an analysis *within* the

“structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the heteroglossia of his [sic] epoch" (Bahktin, 1934/1982, p. 300).

On Creativity

In order to author a text as a multivocal interaction of multiple consciousnesses— both historical and contextually situated selves— I have approached authorship as assemblage and not as an act of construction. Construction implies something fixed and final, strictly organized and singularly read. Additionally, in a constructed text analysis occurs separate from authorship, either addressing interpretation— which assumes authorship is strictly rational— or deconstruction— which is governed by impenetrable externalities. Instead, this study employs “deeply layered, nuanced (post)reflexivity” (Vagle, 2014) rather than employing the “method of abstemious reflection” (Van Manen, 2014) of hermeneutic phenomenology. By approaching authorship as inherently self-reflexive, the study attempts to explicate the theoretical, philosophical, political, and æsthetic influences and choices that permeate the production of the text. Moreover, I believe that the researcher, in order to honor the goal of looking at what is usually looked through, must be doubly present in the research; in this study, I have done this by locating various manifestations of myself and my experience of authority within the text and by intending to my embodied presence as author in the moment of authorship.

In this text, I have indicated changes in authorial intensity and voice through several methods. Assembled narratives that can be isolated from analytic and expository text have been rendered using the Cronos typeface designed by Robert Slimbach in 1996; in part, this font was chosen for purely æsthetic reasons, but it is also similar in

appearance, kerning, and readability to Times New Roman. Selected quotations and block quotes have been set in Adobe Caslon Pro to take full advantage of ligatures and old-style numbering, allowing the passage of time to be made visible within the text. I have employed footnotes throughout the text tied to voice through color. Black footnotes are more academic in character, usually providing additional sourcing or explanation. Footnotes in “Free Speech Red” indicate asides or intrusions of authorial voice in the moment of authorship. Similarly, “Pigment Green” and “Navy Blue” footnotes are indicative of an adolescent and pre-adolescent voice, respectively. As the authorship of this study approaches the present moment, such voices may seem to become less-intrusive and more singular, but remain present, subsumed within the previously double-voiced prose by the change in authorial intensity. No longer speaking over and against each other, they become a chorus.

Illustrations such as those on pages 10 and 14 also appear throughout the study. In each case, the illustrations are rendered in “Sky Blue” and appear at the end or immediately after the narrative that they illustrate. While the figures that appear before each chapter are designed to establish context and encourage curiosity, the illustrations that appear behind the text are designed to "embody and provoke interdisciplinary encounter, both literally [...] and figuratively” (Dillon, 2007, p. 2) by employing palimpsest. The act of assemblage requires that illustrations are inserted beneath the text after the text has been crafted. The production of illustrations, however, occurred alongside and as an aspect of authorship. In the reader’s intentionality, the illustrations exist in four distinct relations: ignored in favor of attending to the text, attended to instead

of the text, read synergistically with the text, and understood as a contradiction. By layering text and image in the fashion, "[…] the palimpsest becomes a figure for interdisciplinarity— for the productive violence of the involvement, interruption, and inhabitation of disciplines in and on each other" (p. 2). It also allows the reader to engage in a similar process to the act of authorship: moving from moment to moment within the text as a study in self-reflexive *différance*. This study has therefore employed a method that is purposely "generative, creative, and complicated" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 118)— rather than a merely analytic, reductionist, and deterministic process—to create a shifting and situated assemblage in which authority and its disruption can be *taken up* but never finally or definitively *put down* or *set aside*.

The primary rhetorical tool used in post-intentional phenomenological research "to discuss and open up complicated movements and interactions" (Vagle, 2014, p. 118) is the Deleuzoguattarian concept of "lines of flight." More than just a playful exploration of subject, Deleuze and Guattari hold that lines of flight address connections between the seemingly disparate that disrupt the usual reasoned segmentations and stratifications (eg., 1987, p. 506). In this study, therefore, I have presumed— despite being perceived as distinct, historical, and situated— that the multiple lived through-ness of the phenomenon is interconnected, immanent, and comprises a plane of consistency. The fleeting partiality sought by post-structuralism is present in moments of "rupture" as lines of flight explode, spread out, and capture new intensities that reterritorialize the phenomenon. These ruptures are, I believe, experienced as inspiration, seemingly random and inscrutable,

occurring only when particularly situated and cognitively ready, but always already present and waiting only authorial intention.

Articulating this stance is important. If I am to assume that most readers adhere to the Western cultural model of creativity (Sawyer, 2012, pp. 12-14), particularly that which insists that creativity is the inexplicable, unconscious work of outsiders, that upends convention, and is produced in isolation from the world, I must also assume that the process of academic work authoring a phenomenon from within various manifestations of it cannot be creative. Similarly, I could not claim creativity if I were to operate only within an understanding of creativity as that which concerns the development of the new and novel; where relations exist in a plane of consistency sudden lines of flight may have the seeming of the new but are only new within the limited directionality of our gaze. I am also leery of the statist and capitalist drive to define creativity as a "process of having original ideas that have value" (cf., Robinson, 2011), both for the fixation on originality that is necessary for embodied processes to become decontextualized and disembodied intellectual property and for the need to affix worth for its utility. Instead, I believe that creativity is a problem-solving process in which an apparent disjunction with or in the world impels expression. According to Dewey:

> "An impulsion cannot lead to expression save when it is thrown into commotion, turmoil. Unless there is com-pression nothing is ex-pressed. The turmoil marks the place where inner impulse and contact with environment, in fact or in idea, meet and create a ferment" (1934/2005).

I owe much of my current thinking to my childhood experience as a gifted student when I was introduced to synectics (Gordon, 1961/2015) as a problem-solving methodology in which the emotional, the affective and the non-rational were more important than intellectually isolated, rational cognition. As a process that relies on imagination and analogy, it differs from structuralist notions of deconstruction and construction. Rather than internalizing the external through construction or distancing and decentering the self through deconstruction, synectics generatively uses turmoil by "making the familiar strange" and "making the strange familiar" (1961/2016, p. 67). In doing so synectics relies on the compressive action of syncretism; not merely taking disparate things and placing them in relation to each other— an impossibility if unrelated things are, in fact, incommensurable— but placing seemingly disparate things in conversation without the "need to refuse one in order to embrace the other" (Vagle, 2014) in order to create a ferment. I have done this, embracing a complexity of relations and continual interconnectedness, by rejecting the historicity of methodological certainty through an "awareness of multiple intentions" (hooks, 2010, p. 106), by placing my multiply-situated and historical selves both within the text and in conversation with it and each other, and by approaching creativity as the embodied process of generating insight intended to in the moment of creation.

Empirical Materials

To make it possible to explore the various partial tentative manifestations of authority and its disruption in the context of my personal history as a student, teacher and academic, I have divided this dissertation into separate but interleaved topics so that each

chapter might be taken up in any order and in conversation with other chapters. The organization presented here reflects my process of thinking about and writing through the topic and includes moments of inspiration and disruption. To fully utilize the Deleuzoguattarian concept of assemblage, I encourage readers to encounter the text as a multiplicity, following lines of flight and experiencing changes in intensity by moving *across* topics as each discrete piece is reterritorialized, rather than simply reading *through* the text. To facilitate that movement, I have briefly outlined the chapters below.

In Chapter Two, I explore the history and historicity of authority in the art-room and examine Procrustes as a metaphor for schooling. I take up some of the important trends in art education in American public schools, beginning with Walter Smith and the Massachusetts Normal Art School. Drawing upon my experience as a student, teacher, and scholar, I explore the student experience of several pedagogical approaches to the teaching of visual arts that have framed American visual art education in the public schools, including the industrial model of education prevalent in the 1870s, the invasive Modernism of Roger Fry and Clive Bell, the well-meaning monoculturalism of Picture Study, and the new standards and assessments produced in the last several years by the National Art Education Association and its allies. I also post-reflex on the role of the arts under the aegis of reform, addressing the de-emphasis of the arts as ways of seeing and being, and the pervasive need to adhere to a fixed version of the world.

Chapter Three examines the promotion and disruption of authority by teachers as the creation of affinities. Connecting with ideas of *Sehnsucht*, transcendence, and community, readers encounter narratives around the idea that, in order to be fair,

authority must be shared and equally— or at least equitably— held within and across social groups. This chapter includes an account of my 2nd-grade rebellion against the pledge, beginning with being "churched" and moving into the disjunction between the idealism of what was taught the reality of curtailed freedoms. Further narrative examines the impacts of placement, tracking and de-tracking, the limitations of "painting only with pink," and the educative potential of allowing students to meaningfully disrupt the authority of their teachers.

Chapter Four draws upon feminist and transgressive pedagogies (Haug, 1999; Lather, 1995; hooks, 2010) and psycho-social development to examine the disruption of authority as the struggle for autonomy (Vansteenkiste, et. al, 2004; Crone & Dahl, 2012; Yeager, et al. (2014); Van Petegem, et. al, 2015) and as a source of humanization (Freire, 1970/2000; Kumashiro, 2002). I draw upon stories of my own teaching experience an art teacher to take up what it might mean to be a "disrupting authority." I propose that teachers can disrupt the authority of their students as part of "problem-posing education" and do so without further marginalizing or dehumanizing them. Through engaging students about the merits of Picasso and Braque, I examine the possibility for students to disrupt the teacher's and the text's authority. I also engage with the educative potential of continuing to teach incorrect theory in order to allow the pedagogical space for students to experience meaningful rebellion.

In Chapter Five, I identify approaches of my mature— but still evolving— pedagogy. Through stories of my experience as an instructor and graduate student at the University of Minnesota, I examine my attempts to "put it all together" and to become a

disruptive authority. Specifically, I examine my experiences with the Neighborhood Bridges program and the surprising resistance I encountered when asking students to take up their own authority. I connect authority to "the naming of things," the performance of identity, the relationship between authority and agency, and the appeal of post-critical pedagogy. I trace a shift from being a "reflective practitioner" to "becoming disruptive," driven by my desire to realize Schön's "reflection-in-action" and to reconnect with Dewey and identify the core features of my own "pedagogic creed."

Finally, in Chapter Six, I consider how my research might further instigate disruption as part of an anti-oppressive pedagogy. I speculate on a possible "taxonomy of authorial intensities" that teachers might use to enhance critical self-awareness and examine how their pedagogical choices both offer and disrupt authority and meaningfully allow and defer disruption. Arts classes are one of the few remaining bastions of student authorship in the public schools and arts teachers are a necessary foil to the continued standardization, stratification, and marginalization of students. I therefore encourage art teachers as part of their teacher preparation and their ongoing practice to cultivate "disruptive dispositions," and to leverage the full aesthetic and humanizing potential of the arts to influence their fellow teachers, students, parents, and policymakers to embrace a model of education in which neither wisdom nor the world are inherited but are made, unmade, and remade by students who are the full and unquestioned authors of their own experience.

Figure 2. Self-Portrait, digital paint, 2012.
Exhibited at UNCC Student Union Art Gallery, Spring 2013.

Chapter Two: Constructed Authority

Let me tell you the story.

I first encountered Walter Smith in one of the darkest moments of my adult life[17].

I was on the verge of becoming one of "those teachers" who teach for a few years before leaving the profession forever. To my mind, No Child Left Behind had entrenched class and race inequities in the guise of opportunity and accountability; that had been a difficult time to choose to start my teaching career. But as that race to the bottom was replaced with Race to the Top, I began to question, not just if I had a future in education, but whether public education had any future at all. I was dismayed that Hope and Change were replaced by Test and Blame and that public education was being led by a basketball player whose only education experience was running Chicago schools into the ground. I was even going back to college to get my Master's degree— a sure sign, for many of the veteran teachers I knew, that I was implicitly admitting that I could not cope with the realities of the classroom. To them, it was a betrayal. People with Master's degrees were burned-out, failed teachers who had become administrators because there was nothing else they could do with a degree in education. Burn-outs were the ones who imposed curricula, who conducted meaningless snapshot observations, and who told the veterans how to teach despite being terrible

[17] Smith was, sadly, already dead having passed away some one-hundred and twenty years previously. My knowing of him, my estimation of him as an art educator, and my concern with his continuing influence on American arts education came from reading through his canon, especially his 1873 text on geometrical drawing.

teachers themselves.

Yet, I had no interest in "working uptown," I enjoyed teaching, had a good reputation with the parents and rapport with the students; I was not burned out. I cannot claim that I enjoyed a good working relationship with my administration, and in part this came from the same place as the veteran teachers' mistrust: I did not enjoy being condescended to or having curricula imposed upon me by people who made the right decision when leaving the classroom but could have made a better decision by leaving the profession. As I saw it, I had been repeatedly forced to compromise my values in service to an incompetent principal at a private school that was rapidly becoming a con for extracting money from wealthy parents who didn't know any better. Even compromised, I tried to fight in all the little ways that teachers can. I kept my students safe and gave them as many opportunities to move beyond the curriculum as I dared. When questioned about my pedagogy, I defended my belief and advocated on students' behalf. When my supply budget was redlined in favor of test-prep materials and new netbooks, I made do with little and got by with less. In the end, I was pushed to quit[18].

As part of her campaign to drive me out, the principal had openly questioned parents about my credentials, my teaching ability, and my interactions with students and asked them if they "knew *anyone*" who would be interested in replacing me. Although I had been the lead specials teacher before she became principal, she saw to it that I was the only specials teacher, having quickly dismissed the others after accusing them of insubordination and theft. When I

[18] On short notice in the middle of the Fall Semester.

refused to work unpaid overtime, she reacted by cutting my hours in half while also insisting that I work in the kitchen as an unpaid substitute cook "since I was there [at school], anyway." When she realized that bullying me directly wasn't working, she went after me with the students, providing a total art-supply budget of just under two dollars for the year. She also accused me of trying to steal her job by simply asking parents for art supplies to supplement the slashed budget. That she could not explain why a ten-thousand-dollar tuition came without specials teachers or art supplies was entirely my fault. I know I shouldn't have quit in mid-term, but there didn't seem to be much choice.

To disguise her own lack of competence, the principal— having nearly completed the purge of teachers she felt threatened by— told the parents that I had spontaneously moved to Florida and had left neither phone number nor forwarding address. In reality, my wife and I had been taken in by my sister, only a few miles away from the site of my former school, where we would remain until I graduated. Crammed into the spare bedroom in my sister's condo, unemployed and with no real prospects for employment, denied even the chance to say goodbye to my students, I was at the bottom of a dry well, unable to move forward or back and missing the sight of the horizon that now hung above me as a distant circle limned with a now-impossible future.

"But," my sister argued, "There's always UNC."

It would mean going deep into debt, but there was a point where, having not yet paid off my bachelor's degree, more debt simply became a meaningless abstraction. If it would already take me forever to pay it off, what problem was a longer forever? With my wife in favor and my sister willing to help keep us fed and housed, I scheduled an appointment to

take the Miller's Analogies Test. In less than two weeks, I had my scores in hand, applied, and was quickly accepted into the program. Buoyed by my score, the few weeks between being accepted and starting classes in January restored both my hope that I had a possible future as a teacher and that I had reason to be confident in my own academic ability[19]. I was rising up through the trunk of the well, the circle of the sky growing ever brighter and ever wider.

Then January came. I had expected to be greeted with open arms and, more importantly, open hearts and open minds. Rather than freed to walk under a new sky and seek out the horizon, I felt as if the structures of teaching and the traditions of art were blocking my way. I had hoped that my new classmates would all be a bit smarter and a bit more dedicated to visual art as an intellectual discipline than many of the teachers I had encountered at in-services and conferences. I was so heavily invested in the idea of being and becoming a "Master Teacher" that I failed to wonder what might draw others into the program. I simply assumed that everyone saw the weaknesses of traditional arts instruction and the modern efforts to reform schools in much the way I did. Discovering that this was not the case was devastating: having finally seen the horizon, the blind adherence to certain ways of being, seeing, and doing was a pair of hands pushing me back into darkness[20]. Three years

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[19] One of the consequences of being bullied by my principal was that it became increasingly difficult not to internalize the criticism and believe the lies.

[20] It certainly didn't help that we were in an older building on campus in a repurposed room in that, at one point, was divided into two rooms by a heavy curtain. The resultant long, rectangular space was cluttered with long-forgotten projects and the

on I wrote of it this way:

> "I well remember a disagreement I had with the head of the art education department at UNCC, who happened to be the professor I took the majority of my classes with and who also happened to be my advisor. He insisted that there was more value in abstract art than in realism. It was a position that I had been subject to all of my school [sic] and that, as an illustrator, I was diametrically opposed. His take was premised on accessibility— abstraction, so his argument went, was less threatening to students as it was both easier to visually understand (requiring only a knowledge of the formal components of art) and was within reach of students who did not possess the skill for more realistic depiction."

I came to discover that my professor's thinking was bounded by his own experience as an art student in the Caribbean and, eventually, as a visual art teacher at the very school at which he had once matriculated. My professor spoke with such fondness for his times being in and teaching at that school that it was actually off-putting; I held a white-hot hatred for the schools that I had attended as a child and remembered the places I had worked with sentiments that ranged from disappointment to disgust. He, on the other hand, admired the International Baccalaureate program and the network of schools amongst the

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remains of old art supplies. With a single line of tables running through the center of the space, it was like sitting in an oversized coffin.

commonwealths that allowed him to study ceramics in India when he was a student. He reveled in the opportunity to hone his skills, becoming a master amongst other traditional masters, and to see first-hand how the limitless universality of Modernism allowed an Afro-Carib student and his Hindu teachers to work with and understand each other. Flat color, shape, line, pattern, and even the drag of the wheel on the foot and the slickness of the clay body, were not simply examples of a particular cultural æsthetic but became carriers of meaning. Here was true learning, breaking down the usual boundaries of art and craft, emerging from the normal relationship between teacher and student into a mutual acceptance of the other, expressed as the love of being, of doing, and of sharing.

There was much in my professor's experience to be admired, and it certainly wowed the rest of the cohort. Something about it filled me with a dread that I could not penetrate at the time or for some time after, however. When I thought about it and had had some time to probe the discomfort I felt with his story, I came to a few conclusions. First, I was jealous. To say only that I was resentful would be to ignore that I was also deeply indignant[21]. My

[21] I had to forgo several opportunities like the kind my professor enjoyed during my own time in school. The most salient was skipping an interview that might have resulted in a chance to study in Germany. I hadn't bothered with the interview, despite scoring highly enough to qualify, because my parents could not afford a passport, much less a trip to Germany. But what worried me was not how little talent or merit mattered when compared to money, it was that I had only been provided the opportunity because I was a White, "gifted" student at a wealthy, White school. I had seen too many of the high

indignation was only a small piece of it, however. There was something that seemed off about traveling to a foreign land, training with masters, not just of a craft, but of a traditional form of it that was still being practiced by indigenous artists with techniques unchanged over millennia, and emerging from the experience convinced that Modern Art had got it right. There was something about my professor's love for abstraction that seemed out of place in both Barbados and India; not to say that artists couldn't take up any cultural or æsthetic influence, but that they should probably refrain from blindly doing so. Picasso was undoubtedly influenced by West African tribal art, but his appropriation of African masks, decoupled from any understanding of them, always seemed like yet another White man's intellectual and cultural theft. That my professor was turning this sort of self-serving multiculturalism to his benefit as an Afro-Carib man didn't seem to make it any less of an imposition of the colonial "West," and our ways of being and seeing, upon the traditional artists he was there to study. How could he be exposed to and immersed in another visual cultural and decide that the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design were universal? How could he, given a chance to experience the art and artistic production in context, decide that students benefited from a variety of historical and cultural exemplars more when they were decontextualized? What use were the art elements if their purpose was to reduce the interleaved and evolving complexity of artistic production to fixed, singular understandings of

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school students I taught denied even the chance at those sorts of opportunities because they were poor, or a minority, or just because they went to a school that was not wealthy and White.

artistic intent that favored "Western" ideas of abstraction and expression?

While we disagreed on the role of the Elements and the Principles, our disagreement wasn't just on multicultural or colonial lines. After a few weeks, it became clear that the conflict was also logocentric, phallocentric, and racist. The ostensible disagreement was about pedagogy; does introducing diverse exemplars only by the features of Modernist formalism undercut diversity by reinforcing the apparent supremacy of Modern Art, or does it make a wider variety of works accessible to students who were, like it or not, already schooled in Modernist concerns? In reality, the disagreement was about three things: the particular definition of a few commonly-used, and misused, terms; no small amount of male posturing and ego; and the performance of Whiteness and White guilt. Of our cohort of nine art educators, the three of us who explicitly questioned the promotion of abstraction as a source of universal meaning also happened to be White and identify as male. It was an immediate source of discomfort; as a teacher, I had come to know that by being outwardly male, I was always embodying discursive masculinity, machismo, and misogyny even as I might try to fight it. Similarly, by simply having a White body, I was always embodying racism. Here we were, three White men arguing with the male Afro-Caribbean professor while the just-as-capable women educators largely refused to participate other than occasionally sighing or rolling their eyes as we wasted their time. It was, as I would tell my wife after our third session, little more than "an academic dick-fight."

I subsequently realized that we three opposed our professor's claim on very different grounds. One of my erstwhile co-conspirators was a graphic designer by trade who was not concerned with the reliance on art elements *per se* but was unsettled by the post-modern

comingling of different cultural æsthetics within the same lesson. In his view, exposing students to multicultural exemplars was fine so long as they were separate, self-contained experiences that produced separate, self-contained artworks. My other co-conspirator was a painter with whom I initially agreed when he argued that artistic intent can be purely æsthetic rather than meaningful. Where we parted ways was his idea that pure abstraction might work in Barbados, but that "American kids are more sophisticated than that."

I had no illusions about the sophistication of American kids. Instead, I worried that the reliance on abstraction was fundamentally opposed to the usual artistic developmental progression of students (e.g., Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987, Edwards, 2012), regardless of culture, who, by the time they were old enough to understand abstraction, were also overtly concerned with realistic depiction. I was dissatisfied with the diminished potential for the development of perception and skill and concerned that abstraction implicitly limited students' ability to understand the world and produce art. I was not opposed to abstraction being a component of art education, although I would question how much a role it should play. Nor was I opposed to the post-modern approach of using whatever technique, materials, and style might accomplish the artist's goals[22]. In refusing to address the mostly White, largely male, hetero, Anglo, Christian, and "Western" roots of Modernism, however, I was convinced that we were at best promoting a style of art that had died decades earlier and at worst were

[22] I had begun to consider myself a post-modern artist and saw the value in informed historical and cultural appropriation, mixing media, and purposeful hybridity—of which abstraction can often play an important part.

being blindly sexist, racist, classist, xenophobic, and ahistorical.

That week, the professor met with the graphic designer and, several days later, with the painter. Somehow, outside of the usual classroom environment, he had persuaded them that he had been right all along. When I asked the painter-cum-art-teacher what the professor had said to change his mind, he told me that he, "didn't really get it all," but that, "it was all about Plato." After pressing him on it, all he could say was that, somehow, "Realistic art was a lie." I wanted to finish that thought the way I'd once been told Picasso would, "…that helps you see the truth," but this art-as-lie felt differently constructed. It seemed like the argument ran, "Realistic art is a lie, so don't do realistic art" which was close enough to "Art is a lie, so don't do art," that it felt like a particularly strange thing to have heard either from an ancient Greek philosopher or from a professor of art education.

I, having just had to leave a position because my principal felt that I was trying to undermine her authority, set out to potentially undermine the authority of the very person on whose good opinion the completion of my freshly begun degree depended. From the few vague clues and the muddled third-hand understandings of my fellow student, I began to piece together how it was my professor might believe that art being a lie argued for the teaching of abstraction. Finding this meant trying to penetrate both Plato's understanding of how art imitates reality and how Modern artists and critics took up Platonic thought in defense of their own artistic and æsthetic choices. For that I needed Plato. On Project Gutenberg, I found a copy of *The Republic* that had been translated by Benjamin Jowett in the nineteenth century; I imagined that this version rather than any Penguin classic edition would have been the one that Modernists read. It seemed a perfect way to set about my potentially

ill-advised task.

Certainly, the intrinsic arrogance of Modernism seemed to echo the idea that "the good of each art is specifically confined to the art" (Plato, 360/1856, p. 83). The abhorrence of representation might be taken from the ideas that "all poetical imitations are ruinous to the understanding of the hearers, and that the knowledge of their true nature is the only antidote to them" (p. 695). But what struck me as the most Modern of Plato's ideas was the informal fallacy in the *ad hoc* argument that:

> "The real artist, who knew what he was imitating, would be interested in realities and not in imitations; and would desire to leave as memorials of himself works many and fair; and, instead of being the author of encomiums, he would prefer to be the theme of them" (p. 706).

This was, in my experience, as central to the Modernist project as it was fallacious. By constructing their creations as *eidetic* rather than *mimêtic*, Modernists became "real" artists who employed abstraction as a way of getting at the truth of the subject of their abstraction, its *eidos* or big-F Form, rather than imitate its appearance as it is perceived by the artist, its *mimêma* or small-f form. I also found it interesting that Plato had Socrates construct his argument with Glaucon around the idea that there are three "kinds" of things: one which is made by God and is ideal, one which is real in the world made in the semblance of the ideal, and one which is made by the painter who is merely "the imitator of that which the others make" (p. 703). Modern artists, by eschewing direct representation of any specific *thing* were attempting to solve the problem of mimêsis; here, they might say is not *the* particular bed we see in front of us, but rather the idea of *a* bed.

It seemed to me that, by doing this, Modernists were attempting to take on the role of Socrates' carpenter, yet it was also clear that, no matter how much they abstracted their image to avoid the specificity of their observed reality and no matter how ably they accessed the bed's ideal Form, they still could not use their "true knowledge" of a bed's nature to create an image of a bed that was as real as the bed we sleep upon[23]. It also seemed clear, while abstraction might be eidetic, that realistic depiction involved both the *mimêma* and the *eidos*; indeed, I could not imagine a situation in which a realistic depiction of something did not allow us to both perceive its appearance and understand, name, or categorize it. There simply could not be a perfect, fixed, and unchanging Form that was somehow a-temporal and a-spatial, existing outside of any particular time and place, but rather in all times and places. There was no universally true bed, outside of and separate from the world, of which all beds are worldly manifestations and all pictures dangerous imitations. I came away from reading *The Republic* certain that Form was a fallacy, and with mimêtic form capable of doing the same work in the world as that eidetic ideal, formalist abstraction was, at best, an empty æsthetic.

When we met for class the next week, I was the sole hold-out against abstraction as either the heart or the whole of art education. I was also energized, and armed with the

[23] Although we could technically sleep on a canvas painted with the image of a bed; that image is clearly not actually a bed. I am also convinced that, reading this, some artist will come along and make an image of a bed out of a bed, or on a bed, such that the bed could be both the image and the thing on which we sleep.

certainty that the Fauvists, other Post-Impressionists, and particularly the Abstract Expressionists— all those who so readily took up Platonic thought— were not so much articulating a new theory of depiction as they were finding a convenient excuse for their lack of formal artistic training, their paucity of skill, and their limited ability to draw the world as they saw it, rather than as they perceived it. In my journaling of that week, I wrote:

> "At some point in the argument— it had quickly spiraled from discussion, to disagreement, to outright argumentation— my professor made an analogy he thought proved his case. Abstraction had the same relationship to realism as instrumental music did to vocal music; music can lack lyrics, and thus a specificity of meaning, while still being æsthetically pleasing and artistically valid. I countered with an analogy of my own; rather than instrumental and vocal, I saw the dichotomy between abstract and real as paralleling the relationship between a single unending note and a symphony. We both called on Immanuel Kant and Plato with the certainty that we each were correct. Mine was the greater urgency to prove myself and the greater threat, of course. At some point, I knew that I would either have to convince this professor or give in and demur to his philosophy; while I rejected his authority on the subject, he had the power to assert the authority I did not presume him to possess."

I was actually very proud to have held-my-own against someone that, though I heartily disagreed with him, I respected for the forcefulness of his argument and the clear

scholarship that undergirded his ideas. Pitting idea against idea and reading against reading, it became something other than the rather adolescent male posturing it had started as. It wasn't about us as men contesting terrain in a mostly female space. It had moved beyond any possibility of me trying to assert my Whiteness against his black body, or of him trying to assert his doctoral authority in order to curtail my own emerging authorship. That which had begun as diatribe had become a dialogue. Rather than trying to circumvent the vulnerability inherent in the open-ended discussion, we had moved into a space where I felt we were sharing authority and recognizing in each other the validity of how we each separately authored our understanding.

And then he asked that we meet privately, "rather than take up any more class time with this." I was, I admit, petrified. I felt like I had really achieved something; I had stood firm against an academic without feeling like I was attacking his credibility or undermining his authority with other students. I thought I had dispensed with the hyper-masculine need of being right and replaced it with the more roundly human need of being heard. I had hoped that race and class had ceased to be an issue. Yet, having thought I had broken through, he wanted to meet with me behind closed doors. We scheduled a time to meet an hour before class would begin the following week. I felt that the meeting would become a pivotal moment, but I could not know how far we might swing about the pivot or where we might end up. Of that meeting, I wrote:

> "After nearly a month of this back and forth, we actually sat down privately. Freed from the social pressures— on him to maintain a sense of authority, on myself to prove my own place as 'head of the class'— we

> realized that we had not been speaking to each other but past each other. My professor used a definition of abstraction that, perfectly correct in certain contexts, nonetheless was different from my own. He used abstraction from the point of view of a potter: to mean non-objective work like weaving, textiles and ceramics that used line, color and pattern but did not employ any method of representing the observed world. I used abstraction from the point of view of an illustrator: to indicate the degree to which the representation of an object was simplified or diverged from observable reality. He was referring to a quilt. I was referring to Picasso."

The definition of abstraction that he used was one that I had encountered in high school from an art teacher who was herself a ceramicist. It was also one that had been drilled out of me in my art history classes as an undergraduate; we were asked how something that was non-objective could be abstract when there was nothing being abstracted? Outside of the various schools and colleges of art, however, I knew that the term abstract had become a catch-all for almost any departure from observed reality. I shared with my professor that I found that to be bothersome for two reasons. First, if we accept that no artistic form can ever perfectly duplicate reality, then all art must be abstract, rendering the term moot. The second was that, although it might be logically correct to say that all images are abstract, the work that usually is referred to as abstract is often lauded because of its associations with abstract thinking while work that is more real and therefore less-abstract is associated with concrete,

lower-order, less developmentally-sophisticated thought[24]. Rather than objecting to my framing of abstraction, my professor acknowledged the legitimacy of my concerns and shared a few of his own.

As a ceramicist who had been classically trained in the arts as a secondary student and trained in traditional methods in India, he was concerned that an over-reliance on learning to draw from observation privileged Western conceptions of "fine art" and denigrated much of the artistic production of the world as "low art" and "craft." He recommended that I read up on Benjamin Bloom— who he figured I would like[25]— and his approach to mastery learning as well as his mid-eighties study on the development of talent in young people. He reasoned that if the purpose of our instruction was to develop students' mark-making skills, for example, we might as well have them do it in a way that is uncomplicated by the adolescent need for their work to be immediately recognizable. Those students who might be interested in moving into a career in the arts had plenty of time, he argued, to learn how to draw from observation. Importantly, we could not pretend that we were teaching future artists any more

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[24] I've long thought this to be an irony; simplification is the typical method for abstracting an image, while both a well-developed technique and a greater awareness and understanding of the depicted reality are necessary for verisimilitude.

[25] He was right. I had learned about Bloom's *Taxonomy* as gifted student in elementary school, had used it to critique my own teachers all through middle and high school, and then made a habit of using it to develop lesson plans, sometimes to the consternation of my fellow art teachers.

than a history teacher could pretend that her students would become historians or an Algebra teacher could insist he was training mathematicians. Certainly, students might benefit from the intellectual and perceptual training of a visual art education, but it was a greater benefit and a necessity for students who were more likely to be consumers than producers of art to understand and value the technical skill it took not only to paint a picture, but also to weave a basket, throw a pot, or sew a quilt.

I agreed that most of our students would likely never become artists, but, I argued, that was precisely why we needed to teach observational drawing. The technique was something that could be learned at any point and took years of practice to master, no matter when it was taught. It was simply impractical to look for technical mastery to magically happen when students happened to be in our classrooms. Instead, we should introduce students to the idea that artists perceive the world differently, more complexly, and more completely than non-artists[26] do. Students must come to know something of how those who had been trained to do so could separate sight from perception. Mark-making, color theory, and composition should always be in service to something— even if it's not drawing from life— otherwise how could we expect students to spend their time doing things that served no comprehensible purpose and led nowhere?

He nodded, thought for a moment, then asked me, "Have you ever heard of Walter Smith?"

I had not.

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[26] He immediately, and correctly, called me on that binary.

"Well," he continued, "I have a feeling you will most likely hate him. But I think he might prove useful to you. When we do our research later this semester, I'd like you to look at Walter Smith."

I didn't wait for the research project. I had to get to know him. Having attended a very White, wealthy school in the genteel South, and having later been formally trained as an undergraduate, I had to see what art was like outside the influence of the Royal Academy and L'école des Beaux-Arts Paris. This was especially important in being able to reach students who might use their arts training for something other than becoming a professional artist. It also sent me on a quest of uncovering where art education in American came from and where it was headed. It must be said, however, that my professor was ultimately right. I was fascinated by Smith's ideas on art as building perception and on drawing as a reflection of mental processes. He would be useful to me. At the same time, I was dismayed by so much of how he worked, what his curricular model established, and what he unleashed on the American public school system that I did come to hate Walter Smith.

History and Historicity of Authority in the Artroom

"Trends" in Visual Arts Education

Much of the academic production around the history of education concerns the various epistemologies of influential individuals, of institutions of learning, and of factional divisions within disciplines— often conceptualized as trends, streams, and movements of thought. Undergirding this production are questions about the nature of knowledge like those raised by Stankiewicz (1991, pp. 46-47): "Is knowledge transferred from person to person like another commodity? Or does it change depending on its

context? Is knowledge fixed, eternal, discoverable like gold or silver in a mine? Or is it fluid, volatile, transformative?" Attention to the production of arts knowledge within public schools has often been missing from the several histories of American art education (eg., Whitford, 1923; Logan, 1955). In breaking with that tradition to take on an epistemic focus, Efland's *A History of Art Education* had been "a triumphal arch on the Roman road of art education history" (Stankiewicz, 1991, p. 48). Building on the "keystones" Efland has laid, Stankiewicz has sought (eg., 2009, 2016) to expand the discourse to include more than just the "history of ideas" and the contributions of occasional "heroes" such as Walter Smith (Stankiewicz, 1991, p. 50).

Efland seems to have been aware of this issue. Not only is a tension between the history of ideas and the actions of heroes apparent throughout Efland's treatise, he has framed his "interpretive perspective" in relation to "the existence of various social groups and their interests and aspirations" (1991, p. 7). While much of his work has interpreted the movements within art education as the result of a triad of abstract forces, what Efland calls "streams of influence that are discernible in education generally" (p. 260; see also p. 7; p. 187; p. 210), Efland has also asserted that the arts "are not autonomous realms of activity, uninfluenced by the social context," but are "educational systems" (p. 4). Efland has attended to five features of such systems: (a) the social structure; (b) shared, cultural conceptions of reality; (c) cultural beliefs that imbue educational policy; (d) public schools and other institutions that implement policy; and (e) the pedagogies common to such institutions (p. 4). Despite her criticism that Efland does not go far enough in

exploring visual arts education, for example in non-school settings, Stankiewicz does not venture far from the structuralism that permeates Efland's work.

Like Efland, Stankiewicz has presented visual arts education as a "field of practice" (2016, p. 16), an articulated system built from a series of interdependent, complex social relations between the various networks of stakeholders and the cultural contexts of the previous two centuries. In doing so Stankiewicz has attempted to expand the cast of heroes and heroines beyond the usual players to address the influence of class, gender, and power hierarchies. Importantly, however, Stankiewicz (2009, 2016) has continued to work within a set of assumptions similar to Efland's: (a) that art education is a social construct; (b) that although the human desire to create artwork is innate, artworks are only meaningful within social and cultural relations; (c) that governments pursue arts education for political and economic gain, and individuals for "their desires for a good life" (2009, p.2) or "as a part of seeking [that] good life" (2016, p. 13); and (d) that cultural, social and technological changes provide the lens through which researchers might critically examine the history of visual art education.

Stankiewicz has identified the philosophical concepts behind visual art—such as the perception of beauty, learned primarily by drawing from nature, or the role of big-C and small-c creativity— as "cognitive frames" that "legitimate and shape perceptions of the institutions, rule and conventions that [in turn] influence the structure of social networks" (Stankiewicz, 2016, p. 17). In this way, Stankiewicz has tapped both Csikszentmihalyi's "systems perspective," and Bourdieu's take on the Kantian problem of the subjective universality of taste to imagine art education as a recursive and self-

constituting movement of ideas. By interpreting individuals as unwitting agents of recursion, and not agentic for their own purposes, Stankiewicz has solved the problem of subjective universality, or of the self-in-society, with the complete de-centering of the self. I have no argument with the idea that the accomplishments and shortcomings of the various heroes and heroines are not the actions of isolated individuals but are, at least partially, the consequences of inherited ideas realized within cultural constraints. Stankiewicz has taken the structural farther, however, by presenting the heroes and heroines in vignettes that do not allow their individual characters and complexly-lived experiences to 'sing' from the page. Instead, they are almost never more than a one-dimensional pastiche; Smith as the arrogant taskmaster seems to be a particular favorite. For those who do not qualify as heroic, Stankiewicz has labeled them only by their industry, status, or function within society. By drawing upon Bourdieu and Csikszentmihalyi, Stankiewicz has created an account of the "founding myth of art education in the USA" in which the antebellum practice of art education— promoting industrial education for the poor, cultivating bourgeois taste amongst the middling classes, and imbuing confident leadership and quiet refinement for the genteel upper classes— has been granted a veneer of legitimacy by the inevitability of its recursive social construction.

Oppression in Visual Arts Education

Throughout the history of visual arts education in the United States, "access to instruction was affected by class, gender, and the general social status of the visual arts as a subject for study" (Efland, 1991, p. 2). The belief that education should allow access to

and reify the existence of the various social networks and hierarchies that have patronized the arts is part of the interrelated "systems for controlling the arts" (p.3). In addition to patronage, art education has acted to censor works that pursued æsthetic ends— i.e., for the pleasure of the artist or the audience— instead of for commercial or societal gain. Although fine art and artists have often been treated separately from crafts and craftspeople and pursued the development of artistic skill for different purposes, Stankiewicz has interpreted economic and social concerns as the reasons that "American artists sought knowledge and improved technical skills" (2016, p. 35). While commercial success in the arts could have been a vehicle of class mobility, visual arts also served as a marker of class position. As members of the rising middle class sought to validate their position in society, they sought out the "refinement and good taste" (p.35) associated with drawing and other upper-class artistic pursuits. Gentility and morality were thought to be intrinsically linked; emulating the genteel achievements of the upper-class was seen as a method for "harmonizing and restraining an unruly society" (p. 37). This furtherance of class interests by capturing the nature of taste and defining legitimate artistic production has been accomplished through the "creation of a national art, documentation of exploration and inventions, social improvement through refined taste and manners, economic development by adding artistic value to manufactured goods, and spiritual, moral, emotional, and cognitive development for individuals" (p. 33).

In addition to class and gender, the indoctrination of ethics and aesthetics has also always intersected with issues of race. Prior histories of art education (cf. Whitford, 1923; Logan, 1955; Efland, 1991) have either ignored or only briefly addressed the intersection

of race and visual arts education. Black bodies have been notably absent, both from the early visual arts classrooms and from the accounts of visual art education even after the first two African American students joined the Massachusetts Normal Art School in 1911 and 1919. Stankiewicz has found that, while White students would have learned alongside these young women, and possibly with a third potential student visible in a single photograph from 1903, "most White students encountered African Americans as custodians or cleaners at the school" (2016, p. 268) and not as classmates. In the curriculum, White students would have only encountered the works of artists of color as inspiration for Modern artists like Picasso (Logan, 1955, p. 128), as anthropological curiosities (p. 178-179) or as primitive forms produced by less-civilized people and comparable to the art of children (Efland, 1991, p. 160). It is certainly arguable that the invisibility of race in Whitford and Logan is a consequence of the social context and lived experience through which they have viewed historical developments in art education, but the continued invisibility of race cannot and should not be lightly excused. Efland has contended that the "new sources of content" that emerged in response to "demand for the art forms of ethnic minorities, including the study of living African-American and Native American artists" (1991, p. 258) focused attention on women and artists of color who had previously been ignored. At the same time, however, the presence of a greater diversity of exemplars accounts for little if the epistemological and ontological foundations that produced abundantly male and overly White curricula remain unexamined and unchanged.

In addition to the overt Whiteness of visual arts, this can be seen in the role that visual arts education has played in opposing "different standards of behavior," particularly those displayed by the working classes and the rising numbers of immigrants in the nineteenth century (Efland, 1991, p. 75). According to Efland, remedying the behavioral differences of "an ignorant and dissatisfied populace" was seen as a way of saving them from becoming "easy prey for demagogues" (p. 74). To do so, the early visual arts educators had imputed the moral and intellectual development of their students with learning to draw as "an instrument of universal enlightenment" (p. 77). For students to be saved and enlightened, learning to draw meant more than developing a marketable skill or meeting the requirements of industry, but developing specific moral and intellectual capabilities and dispensing with their linguistic, artistic, and cultural past.

Nowhere was this more violently done than at boarding schools where indigenous children were to be civilized and Christianized. At schools like the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, learning to draw did not occur as part of industrial training because art was "not a trade in which Indian students could easily apply their work within the constructs of American society" and because drawing might allow them to "slip back into Indian ways" (Moyer, 2004, p. 30). Changes in the priorities of the federal government regarding the boarding schools had allowed students to maintain some of their tribal identity. As part of an increasing acceptance of "certain aspects of Native American culture, in particular the arts" (p. 31), traditional arts forms and practices had begun to reappear in the boarding schools alongside instruction in native language and culture. Progress had not been without problems, however.

The reintroduction of traditional materials and tribal motifs had helped to promote Indian art as "fundamentally different in function than the pictorial tradition of Western art" (Moyer, 2004, p.32) but had also encouraged students to use the motifs of their tribal identity with modern media and grounds in order to capitalize on the rising commercial demand for Native American arts and crafts. This was arguably preferable to the denial of indigenous art and artists that had preceded it; at least some of the students were able to learn and grow as artists without having to forfeit their tribal and personal identities (p.33). At the same time, however, the promotion of decorative arts and design was based the Antebellum conception of art as a civilizing force and on the Victorian presumption that the less-evolved Indian was vanishing in the face of White competition. The commercial market that enabled students to fund the exploration of their tribal identities had been inextricably linked with the belief that traditionally made tribal goods were increasingly scarce and therefore collectible. In no small part, this misbelief was made plausible by the segregated system of education that ensured White students did not routinely encounter indigenous students or artists except as a culturally distant, historical, and often romanticized other.

As visual arts education has expanded to include the contributions of women, artists of color, indigenous people, and other marginalized groups, it has also maintained a core set of epistemologies and axiologies. Thus, while the specific intellectual capacities thought to be inculcated with an arts education have changed with each historical era, the concept of using arts education for the moral and intellectual bettering of students has not (e.g., Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013). For much of the

history of visual art education in the United States, the preference for European paradigms— both in the teaching and production of art— has meant that students have been tasked with learning to draw mechanically, understanding art through formal principles of composition and design, and coming to value a limited stock of racially and culturally monolithic exemplars. With changes in technology and the availability of materials the specific principles of design, stylistic allegiances of the exemplars, and mechanical requirements of depiction have all changed over time, yet the overall nature of visual arts curricula has not. Rather than seeking to develop the individual faculties of their students, the proponents of the moral and intellectual character of visual art education have mostly sought to inculcate their own values, ways of seeing, and ways of being in their students. Making the classroom space more inclusive has neither tempered the distaste for different standards of behavior nor broadened the range of acceptable æsthetics, but has led to a "harmonious confluence" of methods (Efland, 1991, p. 262). Thus, even as the diversity of students in the classroom and the diversity of possible pedagogies have increased, the philosophical foundation— based on Enlightenment hierarchies of knowledge, the economic necessities of the industrial revolution, Puritanical conceptions of morality, and the Cartesian mind-body duality— remains unchanged.

Disrupting Structure and Structuration

The view of arts education that Efland and Stankiewicz have presented is the result of epistemic and ontological allegiances that tacitly posit fixed ways of learning about a fixed world and suggest a movement towards a singular, knowable truth. It might

be possible to disrupt this *pensée unique* by complicating the apparent rise and fall of the various trends, unsettling the unquestioned dominance of bourgeois Whiteness, and implicating students as well as teachers as the creators, cultivators, and carriers of visual art ethics, aesthetics, and ideas. This may be done by appealing, not to the supposed heroes and heroines, to the disembodied stream of ideas that informed pedagogies, or to the social networks that framed both, but to the lived experience of visual art education.

The problem with history as the doings of heroes and heroines, even when they are selected to be more inclusive of traditionally underrepresented voices, is the tendency for tokenism and hagiography. The first is sometimes a result of the relative paucity of primary source materials, a seemingly unavoidable problem when more intersectional and broadly-sourced chronicling has been preceded by decades of historical research in which such sources have been neither sought, valued, nor preserved. Perhaps even more problematic is that finding and featuring such voices is often accompanied by the same automatic self-adulation that has consistently plagued neoliberal multiculturalism; having selected a minority voice that so happens to comport with the existing hegemonic narrative, the researcher might assume that all other unheard voices also agree and that they need look no further. Similarly, the beatification the founders of art education is not a history based on "the full, complex life world" of individuals as fully-realized beings but "attends to distinct aspects (variables) of people, lifting them out from the person's inter-related whole" (Polkinghorne, 2010, p. 394). By "neglecting the effect of participants' unique history, social environment and aims on the meaning of that component in the participants' lives," researchers might hope to arrive at a unified model

of historical art education that might also "serve as a guide for future practices" (p. 394). While looking to the past as a method of informing current and future practice is a necessary endeavor, conceptualizing that past as a history of heroes and heroines continues the dangerous anti-dialogic practice of making teachers "the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects" (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 73).

So long as "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 72), the history of art education cannot be a history of ideas within an epistemic frame any more than it can be a history of heroes. Ideas lack motive force and cannot be said to possess an existence independent of the beings thinking them; granting ideas agency pushes the anti-dialogism already present in mythicized history to the extreme of denying all participants subject status and making them objects of a decontextualized, disembodied cognition. It may be that, because ideas appear to possess agency through the stories of those who most vociferously cling to them, we might represent the history of ideas in visual art education— and perhaps all histories of education— as a finite series set of self-replicating memes. If we are to use a memetic approach, however, we are still left with charting the growth and evolution of non-cognized, disembodied, de-contextual *things* that exist as an "inferior alternative to semiotic signs" (Kilpinen, 2008). Both meme and episteme lead to apparent ontological certainty; the difference, however, is that the unchecked promulgation of ideas from host to host does not rest upon the condition of the meme being utile or true. As such, I contend that a meme is not an inferior alternative to

sign, but is a special sort of sign that propagates intentional misunderstandings as a mechanism of control, what experimental fiction has called a virus parasitically inhabiting and corrupting the human host (Burroughs, 1962/1992, p. 49) or what Bourdieu has called *allodoxia* (1984, p. 142; 459-465).

As interpreted by Efland and Stankiewicz, among others, the academic *doxa* is that various systems and social networks have determined the presence and progress of art education in the United States for the last fourteen decades. While it is certainly true that art education exists within various systems, networks, and other social structures, it is also true that the social reality of visual art education complies with Archer's three characteristics of society: (a) that it cannot be separated from the human activities that create it and the human beings who comprise it; (b) that it is fluid, has no "preferred state," and that its characteristics are dependent on human context; and (c) that "what we are and what we do as social beings are also affected by the society in which we live and by our very efforts to transform it" (1995, p. 1). In much the way that socially constructed structures (i.e systems and networks) cannot be divorced from their human constituents, structure is not merely a set of rules (i.e trends, streams, and ideas) that supplant agency, but also "refers to human relations among human actors—relations like power, competition, exploitation, and dependency" (Porpora, 2013, p.27).

Instead of attending to the systems of art education as self-constituting entities, what Archer would refer to as "downward conflation" (1995, p. 81-84); researchers might look to how such systems have been derived from and constituted to serve specific European philosophies and epistemologies formulated in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries by and in response to the lived experiences and perceptions of their creators. Researchers might also address the controlling interest that social networks predominantly comprised of wealthy, White, male, elites have exercised in establishing, not just the physical plant of schools, or the rough outlines of curricula, but what it has meant to be the object of education. Were we to completely subsume the history of art education in structural concerns, marginality itself must be seen as one of a great many intersecting social networks each informing and interacting with the life-worlds of those who have lived the very thing we deem worthy of study.

With a focus on the multiplicity of life-worlds often ignored in favor of overarching structures and social networks, the history of art education becomes one that is not constructed but construed by individuals in and with each other and the world. Students do not have to be compelled to create art by the presence of a teacher or by unique features of curricula; rather, they are reflexively impelled by experience with and in the world and by their apprehension of others' distilled experiences to creatively perform, depict, and relate their reflexion. Learning in the visual arts was always already happening and, although it would not have appeared the same in our histories, it would have continued to happen regardless of any social network. That a specific historical approach to artistic apprehension and reflection quickly became systematized first by how-to-draw texts and then by rigidly structured curricular models does not mean that it was socially or systematically constructed with any fixity or finality. Although it persists with a core of Antebellum and Enlightenment ideas, it persists as a continuing *ad hoc* assemblage principally territorialized around ethical and economic intensities.

The moral character of visual arts education is not a historical fluke, or a vestigial stump of Puritanism, but is an indication of what arts education has always been— an ontological process in which both axiological and epistemological concerns figure centrally. Art education does not merely address what is known or even methods of coming to know something, but how socially and culturally produced ways of being and seeing both determine and constrain the lived experience of knowing and being known. While this suggests that art education has a potential for humanization through conscientização, historically, the axiological concern has acted as a constraint and art education has remained largely deterministic. Thus, attention to axiological issues is only rarely about æsthetics or ethics as a topic for exploration, but about the promotion of particular æsthetics, often understood as the development of good taste, and adherence to particular ethical frames, most often rooted in messianic notions of the artist as the cultural savior of the marginalized. Likewise, the economic realities of visual art education, often benefiting those who would write the curriculum more than those who would be subject to it show that such motivations have been intrinsically, if not inherently, dehumanizing.

The reason for the close coupling of the humanizing and dehumanizing potential of an arts education is the danger that, as individuals are educated out of their naïveté and abandon their doxa, "they are liable to fall into allodoxia, into all the false recognitions encouraged by the dominant discourse" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 461-462). Historically, visual art education has been allodoxic, not by introducing students to a more complex axiology or acknowledging the presence of alternate epistemologies, but inducing them to embrace

ontological certainty by promoting a set of false and mistaken beliefs each in the service of something other. With rare exception, art education has instilled the treacherous, and ultimately violent and dehumanizing, delusion that the formalism of industrial and Modernist art is the only valid episteme through which art might become known. Neither the economic nor the moral purpose of an arts education has been implemented with any attention to individuals as fully realized, complex beings who both constitute and are shaped by their allegiances. As such, the unexamined facet in most social and intellectual histories of the discipline is the location of visual arts education at the "crossing-point between experience and expression" where the lived through-ness of students and teachers is often contradicted by the formal concerns of art and education.

While a complete tracing of the lived-experience of art students under different masters, modes of instruction, and movements within art and education is beyond the scope of the current study, I entertain the hope that such work is possible. Because of the lack of first-hand accounts, such an endeavor must both speculate on the particulars and infer the broad strokes from the few contemporary sources that are available. Additionally, I would look to future research into the phenomenality of art education to employ layers of textual possibility: expository writing that may have little potential for exploring the complexity of lived experience, but is able to employ direct and precise language to establish socio-cultural context; assembled narratives allowing reader to engage and interpret the text as a life-world and the characters as complexly and fully-lived; and metaphorical or poetic writing that might exercise the full, conceptual power of language. Placing expository writing, narrative, and poetics in conversation with each

other might allow for both context and concept to infuse the lived through-ness of being, disrupting the authority and conflationary tendency of history by deferring the moment of apprehension and placing authority, not with the researcher or the vaunted heroes and heroines, but with the reader.

Poetry and Process as Arts-Based Research

To engage with poetry as part of analysis entails making certain methodological moves. In the past, the choice to dramatize, or otherwise artistically transform and present data, has been used to "gain understandings not possible through conventional qualitative data analysis, writing, and presentation…" (Saldaña, 2003, p. 230) Coupled with the desire to "take the crisis of representation into account" (Lather, 1997, p. 233) and to take up the phenomenological principle that the moment of writing is the moment of analysis, I set to writing a brief poetic history of art education as I imagine it might have felt to the students that lived it. Following Van Manen's prescription that "reflective analysis is true phenomenological analysis" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 164), I have sought to imbue the text with reflexivity and to "stir the self as reader" (p.295). I have conceptualized the poetic method of writing as a movement through layers of reflection, action, and reflexion in which the multiple assemblages of self are variously stirred by experiencing the various intensities and exploring lines of flight made possible by the continuous reterritorializing of "art education." As I have employed it, the reflection-action-reflexion of poetics continues from the post-intentional phenomenological use of Giorgi's whole-part-whole method (Vagle, 2014). The choice to distinguish reflection from reflexion, although both are rooted in holistic apprehension, stems from my belief that all æsthetic and affective

experiences are potentially transformative and connects to both “reflection in action” (Argyris & Schön, 1970/1996) and “praxis” (Freire, 1970/2000). Although this poetic-analytic method draws from previously developed qualitative methods, its stands apart from methods that employ æsthetic means to transform data but then conduct more typical qualitative analyses (eg. Saldaña, 2003; Kumashiro, 2015) by placing emphasis on the process over the product.

Because of the emphasis on process, the poetic product need not epitomize the form; rather, it must merely be written competently enough so that both writer and reader might be stimulated in the process of coming to understand it. While there might be a certain allure in poetic forms like free verse, the selection of the poetic form cannot be for the convenience of ego alone. Instead, the selected form must possess analytic potential; rather than differentiating reflexion or post-reflexion from analysis, or even containing analysis, the action of writing and the ongoing poetic reflexion must be analytic. This implicates, again, that the researcher does not have to be a master of the chosen form, but because both form and the choosing of it are intrinsic aspects of the analysis, the research cannot be a naïf, either. The choice of form could come from an inspiration, by the perceived suitability of particular poetic forms, by the exemplary writing of early poets, but must also be inspired by and mindful of the empirical materials.

For this analysis, I chose the sestina because, in its contemporary incarnation, it does not require absolute metric precision but has an arbitrary specificity of form that seems in keeping with the curricular conception of a visual arts education in public schools. The tension between tradition and learning expressed through art education as

the circularity and cyclicality of ideas (Efland, 1991) or as the recursive construction of social networks (Stankiewicz, 2016) requires a form grounded in both change and constancy, and that allows for both the rational and non-rational to inform the readers' understanding. According to Spanos, the sestina's "disparate appeals to the intellectual (the conception of its mathematical completeness and perfection) and the sensitive (the experience of its labyrinthine complexities) faculties of the reader, is resolved in the intuitive apprehension of the harmony of the whole" (1978, p. 551). Authoring a poem within this structure also allows for the reflection-action-reflexion (or whole-part-whole) method to be lived out.

The reflective moment is grounded in strictly epistemological concerns: first, what is it that is known about the subject and in what ways is it known; second, what words or phrases already exist in our reflection on the subject? I addressed the first concern by looking to and reading the several histories of art education (Whitford, 1923; Logan, 1955; Efland, 1991; Santkiewiqz, 2016), particularly for what was visible or hidden in each history and how that might inform how it was lived. The second concern was addressed by creating a list of words that I associated with art education (see Table 1); to impel the production of this list, and keep it reflective in nature, I gave myself a goal of one-hundred words and a five-minute time limit. From that list, I

Table 1

A list of 100 visual art terms generated in five minutes. Terms in bold are common to all historical eras of art education in the United States. Highlighted terms are the selected end-words for the sestina "Artiste Éduqué." Variant stems are underlined.

Terms 1-25	Terms 26-50	Terms 51-75	Terms 76-100
Line	**Brush**	Objective	Modernist
Color	**Pen (and Ink)**	Non-Objective	Cubist
Hue	Pencil	**Mark-making**	Dadaist
Value	**Chalk**	**Technique**	Minimalist
Intensity	Pastel	**Chiaroscuro**	Futurist
Notan	**Charcoal**	**Sfumato**	Suprematist
Form (vs. Function)	Watercolor	**Contrapposto**	Surrealist
Shape	Fiber	**Fibonacci**	Expressionist
(Pos./Neg.) **Space**	Canvas	**Canon**	Pop
Texture	**Paper**	**Proportion**	Op
Visual	**Clay**	**Life-Drawing**	Post-Modernist
Tactile	**Plaster**	**Landscape**	Super-realist
Unity	**Æsthetic(s)**	**Still-Life**	Non-Western
Balance	**History**	**Perspective**	Multicultural
Scale	Criticism	**Renaissance**	African
Emphasis	Graphic	**Baroque**	Indian
Contrast	**Media/Medium**	**Neo-Classical**	Asian
Movement	Illustration	**Romantic**	**Ancient**
Rhythm	Design	Academic	Indigenous
Repetition	**Ornament(al/ation)**	Orientalist	Contemporary
Composition/Compose	**Depiction**	**Genre**	Culture
Drawing	**Observation(al)**	Pre-Raphaelite	Appreciation
Painting	**Real(ist/ism)**	**Impressionist**	**Perception/Perceive**
Sculpture	**Natural(ist/ism)**	Post-Impressionist	Creativity
Chisel	Abstract(ion)	Fauvist	**Skill**

identified fifty terms that were common to all eras of art education. I further reduced the list to only include words that have the correct syllables, potential double meanings, or syntactic ambiguity. Having settled on line, color, value, compose, proportion, and perception, I then began to write the poem, reserving only a few phrases (ie., "cage of slate," "the Reverend speaks of value") that I found aesthetically appealing and thought might prove useful. I was inspired by both W.H Auden's "Paysage Moralisé" and Ezra Pound's "Sestina: Allaforte." From Auden, I borrowed the sense of historicity. Broadly, the sestina is both a historical and contemporary form and is capable of doing the work of multiple historical eras. A part of that work is having end-words that are also capable of being multiply-read. Finally, I have used the overall structure of Pound's sestina to help augment the changes in era and in voice.

Artiste Éduqué

I

Here I sit, a draughtsman of unsteady lines
that creep across the slab. Yet there is value,
the Rev'rend says—not in light, shade, or color—
but in the way a genteel man might compose
an image of Nature's divine proportion,
refine his taste, and elevate perception.

II

We learn to see— in the Smith's conception—
taming our minds just as we train our hands, lines
and forms in a cage of slate, learned proportion
in mechanical perfection. The value
of art is in industry, not in repose,
the proper use of line and form— and color!

III

And yet still we grow, to make watercolor
trees blobbed on paper, or use our perception
to shade light and dark, or use hands to compose
with finger-paints, or color (inside the lines)
with crayons. Each box from Prang is a valu-
able gift: to each child his childhood portion.

IV

My teachers praise fault, applaud missed proportion,
and marvel at the bright, primitive color
suffusing my page. What is it they value?
Is Modernism nothing but deception,
or the creativity that underlines
all artistic thought? I cannot just suppose…

V

Is Millais so great that Genre must impose
itself on Study? Can we not apportion
some time to the Avant-Garde, or learn how lines
may carry meaning? Can I not use color

as color, untethered from my perception?
Can I not (please!) make art that I would value?

VI

Or, should I return to studying value
as highlight and deep shade? Can I compose
my pictures using a refined perception
that holds, not to a canon of proportion,
but to how my eyes apprehend real color,
space, and form— a truer world without outlines?

VII

Time has changed what we value, the proportion
of each piece, yet still, we compose, and color
perception— and it all starts with drawing lines.

Figure 3. A Damned Band-Aid, digital paint, 2016.
After an original painting (1994).

Chapter Three: Disrupted Authority

Let me tell you my story.

I am trying to remember the first time that I felt separate, apart from the rest of the world.

I think this is a different feeling than when I was very little. Then it seemed that there was no distance between myself and the world. All that I saw was all that there was, coming and going from existence itself. At some point, I must have come to know that there was a difference between Inside and Outside, that there were things to be Seen and someone that was doing the Seeing. As I think about it, I am convinced that the Outside came into existence at the same time as my first understanding of the paradox of Time: that things persist even as they change. Yet, even after peak-a-boo ceased being the most amazing magic trick in the world, I must have had some sense of belonging that didn't come from the marvel of seeing my father reappear from non-existence but says: he belongs to me, I belong to him. We are We, together, an Us that can be named and known.

As I am thinking of it, the delight of permanence and belonging is a mediating axiological influence, similar to Vygotsky's mediating means, that creates the conditions in which We and Us might emerge from the primal I. I write this with a sensitivity that some will take this as an appeal to metaphysics, but I am generally convinced of the apparent mystical nature of our earliest becoming in the world for a few reasons. First, there is the idea that we, as entities moving through time and immersed in the experience of time, can be cognizant but not conscious of our prior existence. It also holds that the more removed we are in time the less we are supposed to be able to understand the world

as we did or even understand our previous understanding. I find that argument to be unpersuasive. Not only are we capable of reentering the assemblage of self as it was once territorialized, we are always already immersed in the continuous territorialization of the self; our experience of self changes as our wandering intentionality creates different intensities and allows for various viscosities of flow to move across, through, and between the unstable, shifting semblance of singularity. No, we cannot abandon the self we are in favor of the self we were, but we can call up and intend to our prior selves as a present-but-less-intensely-experienced aspect of our continual becoming and, by intending to what was already always there, experience the intensities of a more primal becoming as a part of our present becoming. I wonder if some of the reluctance to admit to earlier manifestations or allow for their present-ness stems, not from the inability to conceptualize or realize naïve phenomenality but embarrassment about the degree of naïveté that early phenomenality entails.

The second reason to tolerate a certain amount of mysticism in the remembrance of the past is that the very time that we are becoming more-than-I we are also becoming aware of the world as acted-upon by unseen actors. We are enamored with fantasy, I perhaps more than most, and populate our world with feeling objects and talking animals. Rather than proceeding through this as a naïve apprehension of the world and entering another more sophisticated and correct understanding, however, “mythic understanding becomes a permanent constitutive element of our later understanding” (Egan, 1998, p. 36). It remains as a motive force, ignored perhaps because it seems to have more bearing on axiological than epistemological concerns, but vital to expressing, and ultimately

disrupting the fundamental me/not me binary. To feel apart from the world, we first must be a part of it, aware of the interconnectedness of the world and of the illusion of a separate self.

My mind wanders across all the times that I was bullied, and the few I bullied back, the seemingly endless string of fights I found myself in third grade that seemed to be the natural outcome of knowing things other children did not. A certain amount of bullying and fighting was expected, boys being boys, and tolerated as educational— how else were we supposed to learn that the world was inherently unfair and that it was better to be the winner than to just be right? Of course, time and again I was told that I was picked on because I was shorter than the other boys, because I still spoke with a Minnesota accent, and because I didn't like the things that proper Southern boys should like: God, guns, and football. According to my third-grade teacher, the way to avoid being bullied was simply to change who I was. If my parents would just make sure I went to church on Sunday morning and watched football on Monday nights, I'd certainly be a better person. I could be like her boy, who was then in the sixth grade, who had embraced the Lord and been born again when he was my age, played football, went hunting with his daddy and was going to become an architect[27]. As far as being too smart, I would have to learn to hold my tongue so that I wouldn't make people uncomfortable. The things I couldn't change, like my height, I would just have to learn to deal with.

[27] He didn't.

I remember talking to a substitute teacher[28] after one particularly ill-advised fight ended when I had an untimely asthma attack. I cannot be certain, but from our conversation I deduce that she had not seen me felled by that single shot to my solar plexus— the bully and I were between two trailers and, at least temporarily, out of sight of any adults— rather, I think what she noticed was my erstwhile tormentor walking me to the curb and acting, not just apologetic, but almost deferential. She could have done something right then, or even simply listened in as we wrestled with whether it counted as a fair fight if you got the wind knocked out of you[29]. She could have asked me a question I was becoming used to hearing: what did I do to upset someone this time? Instead, she employed a very different tactic, watching quietly and waiting until she could talk to me privately after recess. While the rest of the class was engaged in their reading exercises in the level three primer, I sat bored at the side table. When she approached, I expected her to tell me what pointless work Mrs. Cooper[30] had assigned me from the level eight primer I'd finished weeks earlier, most likely in

[28] I would have never had this conversation with my actual third grade teacher, whom I hated and was convinced hated me in return. She once wrote a three-page-long, hand-written letter to my mother telling her that I was not actually gifted and she would like to have me repeat third grade until I was less "socially awkward" and "learned [my] place." I know I shouldn't have hated her then or despise her now, but it still feels justified.

[29] It didn't.

[30] The names of individuals featured in this chapter have been changed.

addition to the work everyone else was doing[31]. Instead, the substitute simply pulled up a chair and leaned in close. She asked very nicely if Daryl and I had been fighting and I, being scrupulously and often precisely honest, said we had— but that it was probably my fault.

I still remember the raised eyebrow that she gave me, crawling up and creasing her already well-wrinkled forehead. She said something along the lines of, "that doesn't sound likely," and then asked me why I thought the fight had to be my fault.

"Because I'm weird," I answered, "People don't like you when you're weird."

"And how are you weird?"

I remember it clearly because it wasn't what I expected her to say. It certainly wasn't what my third-grade teacher would have said: 'well, bless your heart,' which she usually said when she meant, 'I'm expressing sympathy while silently judging you,' or 'now why would you say that?' when she meant, 'you should have kept that to yourself.' I remember explaining to the substitute teacher, a woman I had first met only hours before, all the things that I had been told made me weird. I was short. I was from the North and didn't speak like everyone else. I had a funny last name. I wore hand-me-downs from my sisters and my cousins instead of new clothes. I was too good at math, liked to read too much, and preferred science fiction to football. I didn't go to either the First Baptist Church or the United Methodist Church[32]

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[31] Mrs. Cooper hadn't actually left anything for me to do. She usually left me for last, when she remembered me at all.

[32] Judaism existed more in theory than in practice it would be another four years before there was even a single synagogue in the county. Lutheranism was reserved for

and had no desire to either be born again or a good Christian soldier. I didn't want to be a pilot or an astronaut like some of the other boys but wanted to design planes and build rockets— although I was willing to settle on being President.

"Well, I'm weird, too," she said.

She explained that she was from Ohio and her husband was Polish. She had grown up poor on the edge of a farm and wore overalls until she got her first brand-new dress from her town's only department store when she was fourteen. She didn't know anything about engineering planes or making rockets, she said, but she would rather imagine that she was flying on the back of a dragon than watch grown men throw a ball around. She told me that no one could ever make her sad about who she was or what, and who, she loved. She didn't tell me that I wasn't weird or that I was somehow special, but that it was okay to be weird. It might even be better to be weird because "normal is boring."

While we were talking, she must have noticed that I kept flipping through the paperback primer that was the source of so much of my boredom.

"Have you finished that whole thing?" she asked.

I said I had and she took it from me, flipping through the book before turning back to the cover and tracing her fingers over the number eight.

"You have nothing to ever be ashamed about," she told me. She thought for a moment and then went up to the teacher's desk. When she came back, after having dug

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Yankees, Catholicism was a papist cult, and all other religions were clearly the work of Satan.

through her purse for a moment, she was holding a dog-eared paperback book that had a funny dragon on the cover, wrapping itself around and through a castellated town on a steep island surrounded by stylized waves.

"Tell me," she said, "have you ever heard of Ursula K. Le Guin?"

Being introduced to that book, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, proved to be of profound importance. Within the book itself, I was entranced by the idea that everything and everyone possesses a true name that aligns with their fundamental nature and their essence. To know the true name of something was to have power over it. In this way, the power of names and naming references a pair of apparent phenomenological constants: the essence of that which is named, and the fundamental character of those who would name the world. The primary implication of the knowable world and the authentic knower was that false names could have no power over me; being called weird was acceptable so long as I was the one creating and owning the label. In turn, this required that I would be able to predict, with some accuracy, how I might be perceived as different and what differences others would be threatened by. Failing to acknowledge my own difference would allow potential bullies access to a source of power. Overstating difference or overestimating the threat of difference would, and invariably did, come across as needless self-deprecation. While this approach relied upon a deeply cynical view of the governing mechanisms of human relationships and interactions, it also established knowledge as a precondition for action rather than an outcome of acting in the world.

I feel I should clarify that, while sharing stories and offering encouragement were certainly kind, the interaction I had with the substitute teacher was not friendship in the way I understood it as a third-grader. Friendship was not predicated on undifferentiated commonality but upon shared difference or indifference. It was a transactional relationship in which— because I lacked the usual childhood commodities of the White, suburban world as well as the capital wealth to acquire them— I would usually have to commodity myself. Yet, my whiteness was not White enough to be a commodity: I was not Southern enough, Christian enough, or wealthy enough. Since I did not have nice new clothes, video games, or box upon box of toys, I had to rely on my wit and ability to make me useful as a potential friend. Yet, the substitute teacher did not seem at all concerned with we might bring to a relationship but seemed to intrinsically sense that a relationship already existed between us awaiting only our discovery of it and our exploration of its contours. She was, therefore, the first person with whom I consciously felt an affinity. This relationship, while lasting no more than eight hours, was based, not on mutual profit or indemnification, but upon what Adam Smith described as "fellow feeling" and "mutual regard" (1790/2005, pp. 33-35). Although this would have been the first time I felt "generosity, humanity, kindness, compassion, mutual friendship and esteem, all the social and benevolent affections, when expressed in the countenance or behaviour, even towards those who are not peculiarly connected with ourselves" (p. 33), it cannot have been the first time I experienced it.

I was often told by my mother and my oldest sister that, before I went off to kindergarten, I spent every afternoon in the summer and the fall at the baseball field across the street from our house in Lake St. Croix Beach, Minnesota. I would venture out of the house with a hard-boiled egg wrapped in a paper towel and eat my lunch in a little hollow under the metal bleachers on the first-base side of the diamond. My mother would watch from the kitchen window, sending Tamara to get me if I was out too long or if it looked like I might wander off.

On one especially beautiful August afternoon, my mother looked up from trying to once again duplicate her mother's peanut brittle recipe to discover that I wasn't at my usual nest under the seldom-used bleachers. A game was underway, the bleachers had filled in, and I was nowhere to be seen. She sent Tamara to find me, a task that took no more than a few seconds. I can remember looking up from the crumbs of yolk through a circle of kind, if elderly, faces to see my sister looking slightly embarrassed. My sister spoke to the people around me for a few moments and I confess I remember nothing of what they said, both because I was four years old and because I wasn't listening. When they finished, Tamara held out her hand and I took it without question, not understanding anything of my sister's haste or chagrin.

Tamara reported back to our mother and then told the story again at dinner once my father had come home: the old ladies, it seemed, had found me under the bleachers and kept me in their midst to make sure that I stayed safe. Apparently, when they had asked me why I was under the bleachers I had told them that it was a beautiful day. Then I offered to share my lunch and batted my eyelashes at them. For all I know, I was angling for the peppermints

and butterscotches that all Midwestern woman of a certain age[33] seemed to carry in their purses. However, what entered the family mythology was that, even though I wouldn't speak to other children my own age, that I had no problem flirting with old ladies.

Upon reflection, I can only say that as a child I had always felt more kinship with adults than with children my own age. Certainly, I enjoyed a great many childhood things. I spent a great deal of time looking for Goldbug in Richard Scarry's busy world and was enamored with *Cars and Trucks and Things that Go*. I learned lessons alongside the Berenstain's Brother Bear and Sister Bear. Before long, however, I came to detest them for the syrupy plots driven entirely by Brother and Sister Bear's stupidity and Papa Bear's ineptitude and for their focus on obedience[34]. The ubiquity of such books doubtless stems from their relevance to early-childhood concerns: bullies, broken vases, visits to the doctor or the dentist, and the myriad sights you might see on a long road trip. Yet, there were questions that could not be answered: what happens when Ma and Pa Pickles cannot afford a vacation, or worse, cannot afford to pay for groceries that month? What would the family do when Sister Bear started having seizures, Papa Bear had to move the family to another state without tree houses in order to keep his job, or Mama

[33] I don't know how old. Older than my sisters and maybe even older than my parents.

[34] As an adult, I discovered that the series had been taken over by Jan and Stan Berenstain's born-again son Mike, who began making overtly religious books with his parent's characters. I now have a new reason to detest the overly-simplistic moralizing.

Bear had an exacerbation of her MS and could no longer walk? Why was it that people[35] lived in a perfect world in which everything was back to normal on the last page and in which the entirety of who they were was defined by their jobs or by their possessions?

We may harbor the idea that children should only have to deal with the problems of childhood, but we would be unforgivably naïve to assume that children are unaffected by adult problems. As a child, I was both compelled by the fantasy and repulsed by a longing for the impossible. The world as I saw it and the world as it had been put on the page were so fundamentally different that they were irreconcilable. This feeling of disconnection and the desire for the unachievable is not a normal part of the American mythology but is a central aspect of European, and particularly German, culture as *Sehnsucht*. Sehnsucht "combines the search for progress and utopia with the insight of the fundamental unattainability of optimal states and the essential imperfection of human life on the level of outward behavioral realization" (Schiebe, Freund, & Baltes, 2007, p. 779). Although developmental, Sehnsucht is not usually associated with childhood but develops as a product of childhood development, "established by the time adulthood is reached and remain[ing] available throughout adulthood" (p. 782). Thus, although there is still the question of the precise timing and potential triggering events of the development of Sehnsucht, it must be experienced as a phenomenon of childhood and potentially as an indicator that childhood is at an end.

[35] Or animals. Animals are people too.

The traditional conception of Sehnsucht, defined by the Brothers Grimm as "a high degree of a violent and often painful desire for something, especially when one has no hope of attaining what is longed for, or if the attainment is uncertain and remote" (1854-1871/2017), might be associated with adolescent angst. I contend that this is unlikely for several reasons. First, the concept of Sehnsucht is built upon desire, not dread, and "is a powerful motivator and creator and therefore an essential part of the flourishing context in which human development and peaks of life evolve" (Schiebe, Freund, & Baltes, 2007, p. 779). Second, Sehnsucht becomes available as soon as there is an awareness, not of what should be or might have been, but what can never be. This awareness, of what I have previously described as the difference between ought and is, is a necessary and likely inevitable part of human development, emerging as a means of gaining a sense of control over and satisfaction with the "fundamental incompleteness and imperfection of one's life" (p. 780). Thus, although there is a temptation to ascribe the development of life-longing with the inevitable adolescent confrontation with social, political, and economic reality, it might be possible to look to developmental theories like that of Piaget (Slavin, 2014), Vygotsky (Fox & Riconscente, 2008) or Demetriou, Efklides, and Platsidou (1993) to better situate Sehnsucht.

In Piagetian thinking, self-awareness is part of the dramatic change of entering the formal operational stage of development. As with a more socially embedded model of Vygotsky, Demetriou et al. locate the self-awareness "to analyze what they feel in terms of the operations they employ" (p. 33) in late adolescence. I reject this; the self-awareness necessary to experience Sehnsucht is a partial precursor of and coincident with the

emergence of a self-aware and self-regulatory hypercognitive system. What these and other theories of developmental psychology (ie., that of William James) assume is that self-awareness is intrinsically adult in character. I contend that children are self-aware but experience the phenomenality of self and the apparent connection and disconnection with the world by exploring different lines of flight than we might otherwise employ as adults. The childhood self is, therefore, both intended to and territorialized in radically different ways and with/upon plateaus that are largely inaccessible to adult cognition. I wonder if the key to understanding our existence in the world as we live it is to intend not to when we resolve our thinking-about-thinking, which may not have occurred even by the close of adolescence, but to when we first become aware of ourselves as thinking, albeit not necessarily rational, beings.

My ongoing childhood fascination with the fantastic meant that the existence of a man in the sky— who you will never see but who deeply cares about you, who causes tornadoes, takes sides in sports and war, and causes the hot teenagers to agree to go out with the less attractive ones— was beyond question. At least it was beyond question until sometime in the late Spring or early Summer of 1986. Even without much in the way of artistic training[36], I was fascinated with the æsthetic character of things. One day, while digging through a random drawer, I came across a Bible. It was tiny, no more than a few inches on each side, and had a white leatherette cover with stamped gold lettering. The pages

[36] Tamara had taught me how to draw a duck, Katrina a tree, and my father a thing he calls the Volkswagen Rex.

were a thin, crinkly parchment edged with gold leaf, filled with cramped black and red text. My mother, perhaps relieved that I had found something to draw me towards Christianity, let me keep it and bring it with me to church every Sunday.

One Sunday after service was over, the pastor approached my parents. Some of the church elders, it seemed, were uncomfortable with my sisters and I being present during the service. Babies and well-behaved toddlers would be okay, be we, she was told, should be in Sunday school in order to be properly "churched." The next week, despite the protests of my sisters and I, we were divided up by our ages. Tamara went with the youth mission to do what I could only assume were teenage things. Katrina went with the older kids to learn about Biblical history. I went with the younger kids to make crosses, donkeys, and googly-eyed Jesuses out of popsicle sticks and felt. Either we didn't take the task of turning a popsicle stick into a popsicle stick with a bit of fuzz glued to it seriously or we finished much more quickly than the Sunday school teacher had imagined, because, with more than an hour left, she decided that we should play a Bible game like the older kids did.

We were to take out our Bibles, a stack of which had been pilfered from one of the pews, and race each other to find specific verses when the Sunday school teacher called them out. There was a certain challenge of asking this of children who did not know what verses or paragraphs were. We were to find the little number, we were told, and then keep reading until the end of the block of text. This was supposed to prove that we knew the general order of the books of the Bible and to help us memorize important verses without realizing that we were engaging in rote learning. At first, it worked, especially for verses like John 11:35. It did not work particularly well when she decided to make it more challenging and give us Old

Testament quotes to look up.

At this point, I should admit to what the astute reader might already suspect: my beautifully-bound, pint-sized Bible was a King James Version put out by the Order of the Eastern Star. It did not use the language of the church's English Standard Version and seemed to consist of a great many more blocks of unbroken text. When the Sunday school teacher called out some random verse in Ecclesiastes, I was ready and quickly found the passage. I am not sure, having long since forgotten the exact verse she called out, what she expected from my answer. I am certain, however, that she was not prepared for the recitation of arcane language or the unceasing flood of words stemming from what she must have thought a quaint bit of religious poetry. She was especially unprepared the question that I posed when she told me I was wrong.

"But," I remember asking, "Isn't the Bible supposed to be the word of God?"

Her answer, "Well, yes… but not yours. That's not a real Bible," was so unsatisfying that it derailed the rest of Sunday school. She suddenly found herself having to field questions from the third, fourth, and fifth graders about how many versions of the Bible there were, which ones were written by God, would reading the wrong one send you to Hell, and if God didn't write some of them, who did? At the end of that Sunday school session, the pastor had another conversation with my mother and it was decided that it might just be better for me to listen to the adult sermons, after all.

The next week, I did exactly that. The pastor gave a sweeping sermon on family life, particularly on the role of husbands and wives. He read from Ephesians, Corinthians, Colossians and the first book of Timothy. I had noticed that he kept referencing the Apostle

Paul and I asked my father a question that he, instead of answering directly, said I should be asking of the pastor. When the service was concluded and the pastor stood in the foyer shaking hands, I went up to him to do as my father recommended.

First, I told him that I had liked learning about the origin of my name. Timótheos had a very nice sound to it. He was all smiles and had pulled me in close to place his hand on my shoulder. His smile fell, however, when I started asking him why he had only used the epistles of Paul. What about Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? And why were women supposed to be subservient to men? Aren't women equal? And why wouldn't Timothy say anything about it, or did Paul only like him because Timothy did only what Paul told him to do? At that point, I had never heard the term "Pauline Christianity" and I neither knew that I was referencing a long-standing critique of Christian dogma nor possessed enough tact to not interrogate the pastor of the church in front of the ushers, the deacons, the church elders, and a sizable portion of the congregation like I was a professor of divinity there to critique his first sermon.

No matter how it came across, however, I was earnestly and honestly curious. While he may have felt the politics of the moment required him to perfectly word and sensitively deliver his answer, I would have been fine with just about any answer other than the one he gave, "Well, when you graduate from seminary you can choose what gospels you use in a sermon."

It may have satisfied the elders and the deacons, who seemed to like the idea that children should be seen and not heard, but it did nothing to answer the question or satisfy the need that had led to it. Instead, it simply encouraged me to go from the namesake of an apostle to apostasy in a matter of seconds. Later that afternoon, my mother received a call

from the pastor who, after being scolded by his wife, thought he ought to apologize for being short with me. That he did not feel the need to talk to me on the phone spoke, I think, to the depth of his contrition. That he did not seem to notice the irony of preaching for the domestic obedience and subservience of wives perhaps said even more. No matter his contrition or his own self-awareness, he told my mother that it might be better for everyone if my father and I simply didn't attend Sunday services any longer. While it would not be the last time that I was called out by a religious leader[37], it was the first time that I was directly exposed to the disjunction between what adults claimed of the world and the way they operated in it.

Over the next several weeks, I continued asking questions, particularly the sort that frustrated my still-religious mother and delighted my newly-liberated father. I learned that my paternal great-grandparents were profoundly religious and that my grandfather had rebelled against the strict Catholicism of his distant childhood. When raising my aunt and my father, he had allowed them to experience a variety of different religions and encouraged them to wait until they were adults before deciding which, if any, religion suited them. My

[37] Being threatened with a lightning strike by a Catholic nun in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Savannah was interesting, but being told I had, "a one-way ticket straight to Hell," by a youth minister of Yellow River Baptist is still my favorite denunciation. I had questioned why a god who would abhor killing demand that we kill all the Canaanites, including the women and children. When I laughed at his answer—"because God loves us"— I was informed about my travel arrangements.

father thus thought it was vitally important to nurture my own explorations of religion, mythology, and even pseudo-science, asking only that I remain both open-minded enough to accept alternate explanations and critically-minded enough not to take anyone at their word. This was surprisingly important to me as a rising second-grader; it wasn't that I knew that any religion was right or wrong[38], but that there seemed to be an innate unfairness built into the culture of the South that favored only certain versions of Christianity and irrationally opposed all others as Satanic. I had no desire to convince anyone of anything.

What I was not aware of at the time was that a year or so earlier in June of 1985, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a ruling that was to affect me then and would impact the remainder of my public-school experience. It is likely that I saw the two minutes of nightly news coverage on the ruling[39] although, being then in first grade, I cannot remember either actively paying attention or reacting to it in any way. Similarly, I wouldn't have reacted as, over the next several weeks, a flurry of articles, editorials and letters to the

[38] Or that religions were little more than shared mythology, used to promote societal conformity, discourage social change, and control the limits of possibility by carefully defining the scope of our imaginations.

[39] I am certain that I would have seen it for several reasons: first, contemporary news accounts from June 4, 1985 include the ruling as one of the top national news items; second, the local news in Atlanta was often sensational and conspiratorial when it came to matters of religion; finally, watching the news was a family ritual that had to be completed before the all-important sitcoms came on.

editor appeared in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution from writers who seemed to think that the Supreme Court decision was either narrowly, technically correct or was an abomination and a sign of the inevitable death of morality and collapse of society. I would have had no way of knowing that state legislatures around the country passed a raft of bills in reaction to the ruling. I would have had no reason to react myself if I had never had a confrontation with my pastor, but for a rather mundane event that forever colored my understanding of freedom and my view of Southern culture.

The morning announcements at the Elementary School were, like many that I have witnessed as an adult, a joint effort of students and adults. There was the daily greeting from the principal and the strangely solemnized reading of the lunch menu, but there were also opportunities for students to share inspirational messages. There were always announcements about school pictures and book fairs, thoughts about the weather, and reminders of proper school behavior. There was also the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

I suppose there could be nothing more mundane, and nothing more emblematic of public education in American elementary schools, than the *Pledge*. Entire generations have passed, carrying on the ritual: legions of children standing at military attention with their hands over their hearts, reciting words they did not understand of an oath they were too young to legally swear, living out a relic of the Cold War and defending against a non-existent red menace. In Mr. Castor's first year as principal, he led the pledge. For his second year, however, the administrators had rigged the intercom and the PA system together so that

each class could recite[40] the oath with every other class following along. Each class had a week in which they would lead the school, beginning with the fifth-grade classes and ending with the Kindergarteners[41]. Somehow, Mrs. Kennedy had persuaded the principal that we were doing such a fantastic job of it that we should jump the queue and show the older kids how it was done.

Mrs. Kennedy was pleased and very nearly bouncing with excitement when she told us that we would be leading the *Pledge* the following week. She was neither pleased nor excited when I told her, some minutes later, that I did not want to say the *Pledge*. Still, it probably would have come to nothing had she not tried to assure me that I was simply shy and nervous and would be fine[42]. I can remember how her face fell, though, when I told her that it wasn't fair that we had to say the words "under God." Which god? And what would happen to all the other gods if we chose just the one? And what if someone didn't believe in God, or a god, at all?

I can only imagine what was going through her head. She had gone out on something of a limb with the principal and here was a student who could ruin everything. If she let me opt-out of the recitation, what about those students like Angela and Lance who were quite shy and would probably like to sit it out? What about the little Jewish boy, Christopher, or

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[40] Shout.

[41] In the hope that they might have learned both the oath itself and how to speak in unison by then. And that they would have learned to behave.

[42] To her credit, I was indeed both shy and nervous and, in time, would be fine.

Khalid? What would happen if an entire class had, in the legal parlance, been afforded the opportunity to recite the *Pledge* and yet decided *en masse* not to avail themselves of that opportunity? It was one of those innumerable elementary school crises that could have been solved with what amounts to clever parenting but seemed to require a parent-teacher conference.

It was one of the very few times in my life that my father was the parent contacted by the disturbed and worried teacher[43]. I remember him being somewhat disturbed by the idea that a teacher would be so concerned with something so trivial. When she expressed her concerns about the status of my immortal soul and her doubts about my morality, he told her that it was not her concern what god I worshiped or if I chose to worship any at all.

He also told me, "this isn't a hill worth dying on." My teacher told my father, and he told me, that Mr. Castor had made it school policy that every child would stand and recite the *Pledge of Allegiance* every morning and that it didn't count because the Supreme Court ruling had not forbidden voluntary student-led prayer. Students could thus still be required to recite the *Pledge of Allegiance*[44]. The problem, as my father saw it, was that it couldn't be

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[43] What harmony my father and I experienced during my teenaged years was doubtless helped by the fact the schools normally contacted my mother who exercised her profound judgement about just-what he needed to know.

[44] He was incorrect on both counts. The Alabama legislature's "effort to return voluntary prayer" to public schools was the precise grounds on which the law was ruled unconstitutional. While the "under God" language in the Pledge was itself not an

voluntary if they were making me do it. Mrs. Kennedy rejected the idea that I either sit quietly or go somewhere else during the *Pledge*, because other students would notice, would ask questions, and would all want to be able to sit it out or leave the room. She thought that I might stand, recite most of the *Pledge*, mouthing the words "under God" rather than intoning them. My father countered with an offer: I would stand silently, hand on heart, no one would know. I wouldn't draw attention to myself or tell other students what I was doing or why. Mrs. Kennedy agreed. I could be silent during the *Pledge* so long as I didn't make a big deal out of it[45].

I would only find out years later when I discovered the ACLU that the school policy requiring the pledge was blatantly unconstitutional and that the compromise my father and my teacher arrived at was already a long-settled matter of law. Students could be compelled to participate so long as they were not also compelled "to confess by word or act their faith therein" (West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette et al., 1943). At the time I was required to stand, the legal issue was not being exposed to the phrase "under God," which the courts have generally agreed referenced a commonly-

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endorsement of religion, students could still not be compelled to take the oath. (Wallace v. Jaffree, 1985).

[45] Never mind that she had made a far bigger deal of it than it warranted. I can only presume that she was so forthright because she saw herself acting to preserve social order and classroom discipline. That this could only be had at the expense of individual liberty was tolerable.

believed historical fact[46], but with being required to swear an oath, which could violate my personal religious beliefs. For me personally, however, the requirement to stand was also a requirement to lie through my actions, to pretend to be part of a social group that valued me only for how I bolstered their numbers and for how my conformity confirmed their political and religious beliefs. In his dissent in Allegheny County v. ACLU, Justice Kennedy noted exactly the disconnect that I felt every morning in school:

> "To be sure, no one is obligated to recite this phrase, see West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943), but it borders on sophistry to suggest that the "'reasonable'" atheist would not feel less than a "'full membe[r] of the political community'" every time his fellow Americans recited, as part of their expression of patriotism and love for country, a phrase he believed to be false." (1989)

My rebellion against the pledge would also later be reaffirmed in Sherman v. Community Consolidated School District 21 (1993) and Lee v. Weisman (1992) as protected speech. By that time, however, I had been forced to visibly, if not audibly, assert that lie over one-thousand times. What was so often ignored by my teachers and administrators as something small, inconsequential and, therefore, unimportant gave me

[46] This may be commonly believed, but is also demonstrably false. The *Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli of Barbary*, for example, states "the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion" (1796, Art. 11).

the sense that being "schooled" was not any different from being "churched." Neither served the purpose of becoming learned or educated but served some other self-transcendent purpose.

In Yeager, et al. (2014), self-transcendent purposes such as "I want to learn things that will help me make a positive impact on the world," "I want to gain skills that I can use in a job that help others," and "I want to become an educated citizen that can contribute to society" (p. 562) showed positive impacts on students' ability to self-regulate when presented with tedious tasks for which there were no evident or immediate future rewards. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Yeager, et al. have connected their study to the current research interest in *persistence* and *grit*. I find this to be somewhat worrisome; persisting in doing schoolwork even when learning is situationally impossible is misguided and a potential waste of time and matériel. This wastefulness is evident whether the situational impossibility exists because the student lacks the skills or scaffolding[47] to meaningfully attempt the work or because the student has already mastered the material sufficiently enough to make further repetitions meaningless. Nonetheless, we do not question the ubiquity of boredom enough in these times.

[47] This lack could be the fault of one or more teachers, but is nearly always the result of a complex set of factors including the economic focus of education and the factory model of schooling that promotes age-based and grade-based expectations of learning.

Likewise, researchers routinely fail to address whether the self-transcendent motives are themselves possible or, if possible, are beneficial to either the students or to society.

In contemplating the possible prosocial, self-transcendent motives of requiring students to collectively recite the *Pledge,* or later to pray for the troops in Iraq, I can only conclude that the language of the *Pledge* is accurate and that it is intended to create "one nation, under God, indivisible." The indivisibility of common membership, however, was clearly not for me; rather, my compliance allowed those whose membership could not be questioned to remain unaware that their rituals were and are exclusionary and innately false. I was denied the personal authority to pledge myself, or not, to the structures of the political and religious majority so that the authority of the State and the status quo would not be questioned. I would propose instead that authority must be shared and equally— or at least equitably— held within and across social groups. Even in the post-Sherman v. Community Consolidated School District 21 and Lee v. Weisman world, students cannot be free of the pressure to conform, particularly at the elementary school level, and we cannot expect them to easily notice the disjunction between the idealism of what was taught the reality of curtailed freedoms so long as pledging allegiance is given a self-transcendent purpose. Additionally, even if we sought to dispense with self-transcendent purposes that are based only on cultural mythology and societal expediency, the passage of time and the variance of context mean that we cannot completely obliterate the difference between what is thought to be, or taught to be, and what is experienced in the world. We must instead rely on transcendent purposes that are not merely abstractly prosocial but advance learning with and in the world, that allow students to assert their

own authority, to question the authority of their teachers, and to disrupt automatic adherence to the tenets of each discipline.

When I was in the first semester of tenth grade, I painted a picture of my maternal grandfather. It was horrendous, although it hadn't started that way. I had begun with a 5x7 of my grandfather, gridded out in one-inch squares, and enlarged the image onto a roughly three-foot by four-foot canvas. This, at least, said something to the level of skill I had as a sixteen-year-old; other students were using much smaller grids and enlarging to a much smaller degree[48]. I was proud to have proven myself, accurately capturing the likeness of my grandfather, and I remained proud until I was more than halfway through painting.

I should mention, for any readers that may not have taken the number of art classes I did in high-school[49], those high-school art projects are almost never as simple as "enlarge this

[48] The assignment allowed using a half-inch grid on the original and required paintings to be at least twelve by eighteen inches, using one-hundred forty reference squares to complete a roughly 2.5x enlargement. By contrast, using thirty-five grid squares to complete a 7x enlargement was a challenge.

[49] Thirty-one. Georgia policy required students to attend four years of high school regardless of when they met the rest of the graduation requirements. I therefore found myself with a lot of electives and only one real interest. It would have been thirty-two, but the senior art teacher did not approve my independent study to creative a literary magazine— so I wrote a novella instead.

using a grid," and this was no exception. Having stretched and gessoed our canvasses[50] and penciled in our portraits, we were to use our bottles of student grade acrylics[51] to demonstrate a monochromatic color scheme and a full range of values.

For me, this was quite simple. I only needed white, black, and my chosen hue: red. I was honestly a little taken aback that everyone else seemed to pick a hue and then grab every bottle that had that hue in the name, including a young woman named Jennifer whose painting was ostensibly monochromatic blue, but who had also collected bottles of blue-violet, blue-green, and every variety of blue she could find from brilliant and cyan to cobalt, pthalo, and ultramarine. Hers, like so many others', looked like ersatz Warhols, solid blocks of vaguely similar color separated into only the coarsest gradation of value: white, light-blue, blue, dark blue, and black. In reality, Jennifer had not completed even the spirit of the assignment, for each shade having used a separate bottle of paint[52], and having left the white of the eyes and the teeth as brilliant, sparkling white.

I, on the other hand, had done everything right. I had selected a single color:

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[50] Or been lazy and used prefabricated canvas panels.

[51] Even at this very White and very wealthy school and in an advanced art class, we could not use better quality acrylics, much less oils. At least we were not stuck with tempera like all the Art 1 students.

[52] Except for a few spots where she forgot what blue she had used for her mid-tone and, unable to compare the wet paint with the already dried paint, used the wrong one.

Cadmium Red Medium Hue. I had left the brightest highlights pristine white and left the deepest shadow pure black. Everything else on the canvas was carefully mixed, subtle gradations with the pure hue as my mid-tone. I had even carefully mixed deeper tones for the backdrop and lighter tones for my grandfather's hair. I had cut, stretched, and gessoed my own canvas. I had used a grid that let me show off my ability to draw free-hand. My colors were consistent and accurate and my brushwork was smooth. So why did Jennifer's look like a mini-Warhol while mine looked like a damned Band-Aid?

It is entirely possible this outcome was inevitable; I did not come to a more mature understanding of color theory until I was in my twenties. It is also, possible, however, that what was missing was a prosocial, self-transcendent purpose, not to allow me to persist despite any shortcomings, but to work to a higher purpose. It did not matter whether my grandfather had become the gigantic, smirking Band-Aid man when he was never going to see that painting. All that had mattered to me at the time was taking each project requirement and proving that they were beneath my vaunted ability. All that mattered when it was done and I was so completely dissatisfied with it, was that I had earned top marks in every category that could be assessed. There was nothing in the rubric about it being pleasing to the eye, complementary of the subject, or about knowing how and when to bend or break the rules. By the metric of the art room, it was a phenomenal success. It was only a failure as a work of art.

Had I taken up a monochromatic portrait with some self-transcendent purpose, instead of painting with pink just to get the grade, I like to think I would have done something far better. I still may have persisted in showing off— the urge to prove myself

was often only tempered by the belief that I had already long since done enough to prove myself. I would have still had the extrinsic motivation of earning the highest grade in the class if not a perfect score. What if I had been committed to the idea that my mother and my grandmother would have both seen the portrait? What if my own grandfather was the one holding it at arm's length? The work of Yeager, et al. (2014) might suggest that I would have persisted and corrected the bland, plastic, flatness of the image before sending it off. I think this is unlikely, as there is little I could have done to take it more seriously and no more time available. There is nothing I could have done, within the understanding of color theory as it had been presented to me, to change the fact that mixing colors automatically lowers the saturation, making the colors flatter, less vivid, and less able to convey the depth of form. Instead, I wonder what might have happened if I had taken the task, not precisely less seriously, but as an exercise in æsthetics instead of a demonstration of having learned color theory? What might have happened if I had not clung so tightly to the rules of color theory but had trusted my own artistic sensibilities, and ignored both my teacher's authority and the authority of the discipline itself?

It was the third day of the semester in January 1996 and I was finally where I wanted to be: in Mrs. Queen's class, with a few friends, yes, but mostly with students I had never met but with whom I knew I belonged. Mrs. Queen was an English teacher at the High School and, as far as I knew, had been there since the school opened its doors some fifteen years earlier. She was a fixture of the school and had a reputation as the best teacher there. She was passionate about literature of all forms, highly intelligent, wryly humorous, and with such an obvious love and dedication for teaching and for her students that she would go without

sleep for days to grade papers and provide page upon page of hand-written feedback.

She welcomed me into her classroom with her usual sardonic smile, a raised eyebrow, and a question, "You're Tim? The counselors have *told* me about you." The way she said 'told,' holding the ell sound for a half-second too long, suggested that 'told' was probably something more along the lines of 'warned.'

Warned would have been appropriate.

Two days earlier, I had shuffled unwillingly into a different English classroom. The teacher was a southern woman of indeterminate middle age, whose name I've long since forgotten, who had fortified the front of the room with a six-foot table, a pair of lecterns on either side and her teacher's desk on the side away from the door. The student's desks were arranged in three groups comprising the sides and bottom of a U that faced the center of the room where she paced, the center of everyone's attention. I had taken a seat in the back at the end of one arm of the U, the seat nearest the door. She started by going over the rules, referring to the student handbook we had all lost soon after getting it as Freshmen, and then segued into what we would be doing for the semester: American literature starting with *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

"What if I've already read it?" I asked, my raised hand beating my question by the merest fraction of a second.

She turned sharply on her heels. I can well remember her expression, her tightly pursed mouth and flat stare, a commingling of puzzlement and annoyance. "When did you read it?" She asked.

"First time? Fourth grade, but I've read it a couple of times since."

"Well, you wouldn't have understood it then. The vocabulary alone would be way beyond you. And I'm sure you didn't really understand what Twain was trying to do…"

I assured her I did, that I understood the how the character Jim could be read with a great deal of dignity and nobility despite Huck's obvious racism or that Twain's use of the vernacular made him less-realized than other characters. I even understood the word 'vernacular.' I was so insistent, and the teacher's discomfort was so obvious, that other students exclaimed that they shouldn't have to read the book either. A girl on the other side of the room professed that she'd just finished reading it. A boy from the back shouted out that he'd read it in Kindergarten. A chorus of increasingly ludicrous claims filled the room. All the while, the teacher's stare grew more flat and her mouth more pursed.

"Fine," she said, throwing her hands into the air, "we'll just do the test today then. I've got it right here. Y'all are lucky I copied it this morning. We'll see how good you jokers can do."

I hadn't intended to be a joker, a trouble-maker, or even to raise a fuss, but hers was a class that I knew I shouldn't be in doing things I knew would be a waste of my time. It was a regular class, and I was a gifted student. I was only there because the school couldn't seem to figure out where I would be successful, something compounded by the fact that they'd not once asked me about it. I had been in gifted classes before and been removed from them because, so the teachers said, I wouldn't do the work. That wasn't entirely true. I would do the homework when I thought it was relevant and helpful. I would ace all the tests, and fight for every point if I didn't get above a 95. What I wouldn't do is speak, whether it was answering questions or presenting papers. With my high test scores, it was clear that I was, as one of my

teachers told another when I wasn't supposed to be listening, "an insufferable little shit." It didn't matter why I wouldn't speak. It didn't matter if I was refusing because I really was a little shit, contemptuous of teachers and authority because I was just a little nervous, or even because I was crippled by anxiety and depression. All that mattered was that I wouldn't comply and, in being willfully defiant, wouldn't or couldn't explain what made me refuse to do what so many others did without hesitation.

As an adult with two decades to think back on it, I can see what happened. My fear of public speaking had developed quickly over the course of only a few months and sprang, as I see it now, from the interplay of several forces. The first was physical. I have been hard-of-hearing since I was two, one of the lingering effects of meningitis, but I had never internalized the hearing loss. I had naïvely assumed that the way I heard was the way everyone heard, and I had maintained that assumption until I attended one of my first conventions around the age of twelve. It was then, amidst the press and noise of thousands of people crammed into the Omni in Atlanta, that my hearing completely shut down. All I heard was a single tone, incessant and piercing. Even then I was shorter than average and I could see nothing other than the bodies that were pressed against me on all sides. I had difficulty catching my breath, I was nauseous, sweating, and dizzy: I had experienced a panic attack. After that, I became fixated on trying to figure out what it was that I wasn't hearing; I was worried that I was missing things that everyone else heard and that every half-heard joke was at my expense. The feeling of being simultaneously surrounded and yet completely isolated was profoundly unsettling.

The second force that held my tongue was social. I had never been a particularly

outgoing person; my parents were told that my lack of social skills was the reason that the schools would not consider promoting me to the level of my tested ability. I cannot know what promotion would have done, but being at a different level and in a different intellectual place than my classmates didn't make me more social even if we were the same age. I was often called on for the right answers, especially when everyone else was busy studying their feet, but not the explanations. At least once a year my teachers had tried that, calling me up to the chalkboard to work some word problem everyone else had gotten wrong, but my solutions were frequently the source of even greater confusion. I would work problems backward, do whole parts of the problem in my head, or simply realize what the answer had to be without doing all the proper steps.

Even when Miss Carmichael, my fourth-grade teacher, tried to bring us together as a class by selecting books that might bridge the divide— *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, and *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*— there was precious little common ground. At the outset, the books were a compromise between *The Baby-sitters Club* and anything to do with either comic books or *Star Wars*. There was nothing wrong with either book she picked. Themes of friendship, responsibility, intelligence, and respecting differences were certainly important to what she wanted to do. The subjects were as close to baby-sitters and pulp sci-fi as she could get with fourth-grade level books. They were good books, and well worth the read. They were also over too quickly. By the second day of this weeks-long foray into building community through common readings, I had finished both. While the rest of the class slogged through chapter three and what happened to Fudge in Central Park, I sat in the back of the room reading about pig's blood and drift canoes. By the time the Frisby house was safely out of the

way of the plow, three companions had arrived on Solaria to deal with hermaphroditic telepaths on their robot estates.

The shared readings only increased the distance I felt from my classmates. It's not that I thought I was too good for the experience[53] but that it served no purpose. They were not about to read *Foundation and Earth* or *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and we already had common experiences outside of books. We all watched *The Cosby Show* and later *The Simpsons* and *America's Funniest Home Videos*, but within a few years they ceased being shared cultural artifacts— or even particularly funny— and became markers of real and pervasive difference. I could have continued to do as Miss Carmichael wanted, consuming the popular culture alongside the things that actually drew my attention, but it always felt dishonest. I didn't want to participate in their world and they couldn't participate in mine.

After my oldest sister graduated from college with a degree in education, she became a substitute teacher. While waiting for a full-time spot to open up, she once subbed for my eighth-grade history teacher and immediately noticed that something wasn't right. She witnessed the extent of my isolation, something I hadn't internalized, and certainly something I never talked about at home. On our way back from lunch, my sister asked several of my female classmates— of the smart-but-popular variety— why I was being left so obviously alone. "He just talks funny. He's smart but too smart. Nobody knows what he's saying," was the answer. I was perhaps six feet away, just around a corner.

I recognized myself in the answer, but it didn't change that I felt put-upon. I was the

[53] Except perhaps for *Baby-sitters Club*, which I thought was particularly stupid.

one who had been placed in an eighth grade 'advanced' math class in sixth grade, and in seventh and eighth, because middle-schoolers weren't supposed to be ready for geometry. I was the one who read at beyond a twelfth-grade level and had maxed-out the ITBS but was stuck in the same English classes as everyone else. I was the one, along with perhaps two-dozen others, who had seen gifted classes move from enrichment taught by a certified gifted instructor to a glorified study hall. It was true that I was also the one who would read the textbook on day one, and, starting day two, argue with teachers about how questions were framed and whether the textbook was even correct. I knew that my outbursts had prompted frequent whispers and occasional laughter. With my faulty hearing, I had just assumed the whispers agreed and the laughs at the teacher's expense. I had never considered the possibility that they were directed at me. It was a damning revelation and, if emerging from my chosen isolation to speak up was the problem, there was an easy answer.

My road to recovery, of regaining my public voice and my sense of authority, took nearly three years. It was marked by the continuous decline in my status as a student and it seemed to follow a process. I would rush to class and sit in the front-right so I could hear. I would pay attention but take only infrequent notes. I would do classwork if it wasn't trivial or a pointless repetition of something I had already learned. Homework, which was usually a pointless repetition of things I had already learned, I often ignored. Having taken few notes, done only a part of classwork, and blown off homework without even an attempt an excuse, I would ace the tests. I would conduct research, write papers, and create visual aids. Then when it came time to present, I would refuse. Some teachers were infuriated, and some distraught— from them I would receive Cs and Ds. A few of them were gleeful. They were the

ones who awarded me Fs.

As a result, I went from being in gifted English as a ninth grader to being in honors as a sophomore. That year I had one good teacher— who told me that I did not belong in her class, that I needed only do well on her tests to prove what I knew— but doing well for her only proved to the administration that I belonged in honors. The next teacher was the sort who was more concerned with rules and discipline than anything else. She was caught up in the process and taught a class that was full of stacks of notecards, endless worksheets, lists of copied and recopied definitions, and precious little else. Opinions, she told us, were for when we were in charge. She grew quite angry when I would take her tests and do well despite having thrown away the worksheets, lost the definitions, and ignored every instruction to fill out notecards. She was so convinced I was cheating that she made me retake tests after school, twice with an administrator present, so that she could figure out how I did it. When I handed in my final paper and refused to present it, she gleefully filled out the failure notice. It was from her that I learned the school was doing away with gifted classes, that mine was supposed to be the last group of students to take them. It was from her that I learned how important it was for people to be put in their place. She could not break me, however; I was already broken. Put me in my place? I already knew my place.

I just needed to get back there before it was gone forever.

Figure 4. “Dave’s Hand,” Double-Portrait, pinhole photograph on light-sensitive paper, 60 second exposure, 1996.

Chapter Three′: Disruptive Authorship

Let me tell you my untold story.

As I write this, I am filled with dread, a worry for the future of our country. I know that we have had presidents who were as corrupt. We have had a president who was as ignorant and as incurious. We have had presidents who were similarly unqualified. We have been led by racists, misogynists, classist bigots, religious zealots, bloodthirsty jingoists, and embittered misanthropes. Yet, I had not expected that a significant section of the American electorate[54] would vote for someone who was all those things and, in many significant ways, was far worse[55]. It brings me to mind of my time as a student, being given detention in sixth grade for yet again refusing to say the pledge and crossing my arms in silent protest as the middle school principal intoned a "prayer for our President and our brave men and women in Iraq" and tunelessly sang along with Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA."

It was my personal experience of having my speech silenced, and of being punished for daring to hold a contrary view, that led me to pay particular attention to the Rehnquist court as it repeatedly sought and frequently succeeded in rolling back Tinker v. Des Moines. The court had originally held that the First Amendment applied to public schools and that both teachers and students had the right to free speech and expression unless there was

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[54] But not, despite the propaganda of the Right, a majority.

[55] Not just sexist, but an admitted sexual predator. Not just racist by inclination, but someone who has actively discriminated against people of color in both his personal and professional life.

significant interference with “the requirements of appropriate discipline. In the operation of the school” (Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 1969). Time after time, the court sided with districts and administrators who sought to undermine that decision by claiming, as did my sixth-grade teacher, that speech and expression not supportive of the majority view was inherently disruptive. In this political climate, silent non-participation was no longer acceptable; simply standing with my arms crossed and refusing to sing, or sitting and refusing to stand, was encouraging other students to misbehave. Refusing to write a letter was enough to earn several weeks of after school detention. It was also enough to make me start paying attention to how teachers enacted their own personal biases, giving voice to a culturally, racially, and politically limited view of teaching and learning while actively stifling speech and silencing dissent.

It began to awake in me a need to secure and defend the rights of children to freely express themselves and to be free from religious coercion and political intimidation. Paying attention to how my teachers ignored those rights also made actively attend to the oppression I saw in school: discrimination based on ability, race, gender, language, ethnicity, and economic status. At first, I was not aware that oppression had a structural component; instead, it seemed to be a vast conspiracy of like-minded administrators and ill-intentioned teachers. As I paid ever-closer attention to how my teachers taught, I saw how some teachers were harmed by policies that they had no voice in making but were required to enforce. I saw how others took pleasure in oppression and far too many who seemed to be unaware that their teaching was harmful to themselves and their students. Although I continued to oppose

the actions of teachers that I thought were unjust[56], I began to focus on problems with curricula, promotion and graduation requirements, and district and state policies that disadvantaged groups of students. In this way, my experience as a student was very different from what Lortie characterized as an "apprenticeship of observation" (2002/1975). I was emerging into critical-mindedness, questioning assumptions of normality[57], challenging the dogmatic rhetoric of teaching and learning[58], exposing the sacralization of schooling[59], and awakening to the possibility—however remote— that education might yet become a force for the betterment of humanity.

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[56] Earning myself several more detentions, numerous visits to school counselors, several meetings with assistant principals, and a colorful "discussion" with the principal.

[57] That, for example, a young White man at a wealthy, White school must also be wealthy, that a fourth-grader cannot be capable of learning Algebra, or a tenth-grader capable of understanding Mark Twain without a teacher's help.

[58] Especially the disconnect between the stated goals of education (i.e., learning, understanding, comprehension, and mastery) and the unstated actual purposes of policy and pedagogy (i.e., cultural hegemony, political proselytization, gender and race conformity, and control).

[59] Beginning with the *Pledge*, but also questioning the apparent Christian ownership of the flagpole, and the numerous required pep-rallies in which phonebooks were torn, recovering drug addicts loudly praised Jesus, and visiting church choirs led benedictions and sang Hallelujah.

In recent years, “woke” has come to mean many things, depending on context, but came to prominence within racial justice movements like Black Lives Matter. As its use has increased within communities of color and other marginalized groups, it has also come to be used a pejorative term for White people, in particular White men, who have some experience that then causes them to finally become aware of an unjust system or situation. The woke man is a strange marionette, once led and misled on invisible strings of prejudice and privilege, now finding that a string has been cut or more tightly tied and convinced that its limping dance is as damnable as the experience of those who have been always bound, gagged, and garroted by the strings the newly-woke puppet simply cannot see. There is something to this rhetoric, grounded in the phenomenality of race and privilege, that speaks to us: people of color do not have to be made aware of marginalization, but Whites must come to know or be forced to confront how they are advantaged by the accident of their genetics and presently benefit from past oppression. There is also something off-putting, however, in the insistence that there is only one possible experience of oppression whether it is a White voice deferring and denying authorship to people of color, a Christian principal decrying the existence of any other religion, or a teacher who cannot understand and will not admit to different ways of being-in and coming-to-know the world.

If I were to trace my desire to teach to any point, it probably would be that first after-school detention in Mrs. Forrest’s corner classroom, as she explained to me that sixth-grade

students did not have the freedom of speech[60] and that she was not punishing me for my point-of-view[61] but because the threat of a zero had not compelled me to do the work. I remember that she was generally a very calm woman with an occasionally incisive wit. Making an excuse would result in a lifting of her penciled-in brows until they nestled under her teased and permed bottle-blonde bangs. She only rarely called out excuses on the spot, instead of twisting her mouth into a wry half-smile, body language that translated into, "well, bless your little heart," and held the same false-warmth. Despite her small stature— she was stick-thin and no taller than her students— she nonetheless projected power and certainty, but never joy or love. She seemed to hate the subject and despise us, often starting class with a stack of the previous day's work in hand so that she might perform a ritual she called "going over the wrong answers."

Mrs. Forrest would start by pronouncing her satisfaction or dissatisfaction with our overall performance, although I wonder how many of us sought her approval, especially as the year wore tediously on. Smiling benevolently if we had done well, or with her usual wry grimace, if we had not, she would then flip through the stack, calling out individual students by name for their mistakes, usually by asking them to explain how they arrived at their answer. I remember how quickly we figured out that she was not going to highlight any

[60] As mentioned previously, this was a commonly held belief. The commonality of it does not change that she was, however, wrong. It also does not mitigate that silencing dissent is a violence against students.

[61] She was.

correct answers or unexpected insights. It must have been particularly galling for a boy like Travis. We were two weeks into the school year when, having already "gone over" Travis's work several days in a row, she asked him to explain how he got yet another wrong answer.

Travis shrugged, "Because I'm just stupid, I guess."

Mrs. Forrest just raised her eyebrows and twisted her mouth. After a moment while the rest of the class sat in stunned silence, she said, "Well then, you just have to get smarter."

She had tried the same tactic on me. Inserting comments into the daily ritual humiliation like, "…and what answer did you get, Timothy?" or "I didn't see your work, Timothy[62]." I was largely immune to embarrassment; not only did I not value her approval; I was convinced that she was incapable of understanding that vague questions could allow more than one answer. Despite that I was frequently tactless and generally oblivious, I was also certain that she did not want me to point out the flaws in her questions or probe her ambiguities. After the third or fourth attempt to embarrass me into compliance, and finding that it had no effect, she directly asked me for my excuse. When I told her I had none, she praised me for "not making up excuses." What I thought, but did not say, was that I didn't need excuses— I had reasons.

On the surface, asking us to write a properly formatted letter was not problematic. Requiring that our letter reference the current historical moment was also not an issue. I was

[62] Although I have chosen to use my given name in my professional life, I went by Tim in school. She was one of very few teachers to call me Timothy and she only did so when she was trying to assert her authority.

a little taken-aback by the requirement that our letter should be addressed "Dear Hero" or "Dear Patriot" and that it had to be praiseful, positive, and supportive. She then told us that she had gotten the idea from her church and the purpose of the letter was to make sure that the troops knew that God and the American people were on their side. I balked. I, like many people, had watched the evening news and seen the testimony of the young woman who claimed Iraqi soldiers were stealing incubators and killing babies. It seemed obvious to me that she was brought in to make a case for war[63]. I did not trust her and that distrust only grew as I heard her story trumpeted loudly by Southern Baptists who clamored for a "just" war, by racists who were only too ready to believe that the "ragheads" and "camel-jockeys" would shoot and bayonet innocent babies, and by journalists who would mock Iraqi ineptitude in one breath and predict the destruction of Israel in the next.

To me, the Nayirah testimony was just another lie told to sell a war to a gullible Congress and a jingoistic public, but to Mrs. Forrest, it was the Lusitania, the Maine, the Alamo, Pearl Harbor, and the Council of Clermont all in one. So when I refused to write the letter, it was as if I was not just being contrarian or unpatriotic; instead, I was being traitorous, speaking treason, and taking the side of infidel baby-killers. I recall being shocked that my

[63] Within a year, evidence surfaced that the young woman was not Nayirah, volunteer at al-Addan Hospital who had witnessed Iraqi atrocities, but was Nijirah al-Ṣabaḥ, daughter of the Kuwati ambassador who had "just happened by [the hospital] one day" (MacArthur, 2004, p. 247) and who had never witnessed babies being left to die on the floor.

refusal would result in a detention; I had not, to my mind, misbehaved. Mrs. Forrest was determined that I would do as she demanded, however, and I remain convinced that saw our conflict at least partly as a power struggle. That she saw nothing wrong with asking students to invoke God, coupled with the overtly religious origin of her assignment, also leads me to believe that there was another purpose to her punishment: because she could not cajole or embarrass a heretical Iraqi sympathizer, she could only hope that public penance might convert me from the error of my way.

Ostensibly, I was there to do the work so that she could grade it, minus ten points per day it was late. I told her, very bluntly[64] that there was no reasonable purpose for taking off points for late work or scoring missing work with a zero. I asked her if she thought I knew how to write a letter, whether I could use and spell the vocabulary and meet all the other requirements of the assignment. I remember that she seemed flustered by this and told me that, of course, she knew that I could easily do the assignment.

By day two, she had gone from being flustered to being exasperated as I spent another hour that afternoon sitting in a metal-framed, melamine-topped desk in front of a blank sheet of paper. And then a third. A fourth. Each day repeated the routine. I would stay after everyone else had walked home and caught their buses. I would move my tatty, blue canvas book bag to the desk by the window, take out a single sheet of paper and a pencil as instructed, and then pointedly refuse to do the work. By day six she must have figured out that I was not going to bend, but having made the threat, felt impelled to carry it out.

[64] And quite rudely, if I am honest.

I was idly staring out the window at what I remember was a surprisingly beautiful Winter day when she asked, "Wouldn't you rather be outside playing with your friends?"

I can still clearly picture that iron-glare she gave me, her face falling from a fake smile into a genuine frown, as I turned back to her and simply said, "No."

At the end of my ninth consecutive detention, she told me that I could write any letter I wished. I could even write her a letter, she said, about why I wouldn't write a letter to the troops or how students should be graded. Perhaps if she had made that offer at the beginning, before trying to use grading as a means of control, I might have written a letter she could use to assess my writing skills[65].

At that point, however, it was all too easy to turn to her and simply say, "No."

I had, in some small measure, won. She would not assign me a tenth day of detention or ever attempt to punish me again for choosing not to do her work. She simply shook her

[65] Although, perhaps not. I had already developed the habit of avoiding what I saw as tedious and unnecessary work. I used refusal to convince teachers, who I assumed were usually uncomfortable giving zeroes they knew did not reflect proficiency, to either allow me to pursue my own academic interests or else work at a higher level. I had not counted on the existence of educators— Mrs. Forrest, a few of my middle- and high-school teachers, and far too-many of my eventual colleagues— who were invested in the idea of using bad grades as punishment.

head at me, sighed loudly, and used her red pen to put a zero in the grade book[66]. After I was picked up by my sister and her Camaro-driving boyfriend, and presumably realizing that the pretend Corvette with the vents on the hood peeling out of the parking lot was probably not being driven by my mother, Mrs. Forrest finally decided to call my parents[67].

My father, who fielded that call from his cubicle, pulled me aside when he came home. He confessed that Mrs. Forrest seemed, "like a real piece of work," but he also admonished me for not doing the work. What stood out to me was not the amount that I could make my normally civil-tongued father swear[68], or that he agreed with me about the freedom of speech and the questionable ways we grade students, but that he saw little purpose in rebellion over such a small thing.

"Damn it, son," he told me, "Sometimes, you just have to play the game."

Certainly, you can play to win and to the victor, the spoils. But the game has a way of changing the player. Who, having won, could object to their own winning? Sometimes you

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[66] All the other missing work in her burgundy leatherette grade-book was marked with either a slash or a zero, but always in pencil.

[67] My detentions had been previously communicated to my parents in the form of pink slips, informing them of the time and place of detention, but little else. I remember telling my parents, with perfect and nearly lawyerly honesty, that I was being given detention to complete missing work. Somehow, I neglected to tell them that I was actively refusing to complete it.

[68] A lot, as it turned out.

can play the game, not to win, but just to maintain a perpetual stalemate. But that strategy only allows for two outcomes: losing, and extending the game until finally wearied, you lose. What if the game is rigged, not by individual players within it, but in and of itself? What if it was not a game at all but was deadly serious? The key, I decided was to get in a position where I might change the rules, even if it meant that I might occasionally have to play the game to get there.

One of the most unusual aspects of writing through this experience is the feeling pull of narrative that would rationalize each experience and set it within a plotted structure. This narrative necessity dictates that teaching requires each person to begun as untaught. To be woke means having to have first been asleep. Yet, I can look back at my sixth- and second-grade selves and say that I did not have to be awoken to the idea that education for all cannot be easily reconciled with education for each. I was already waking up. Of course, I grew and changed, had successes and failures, made faltering attempts and great strides, but it would be wrong to assume that my progress through school was in any way linear or manifest as a progressively sophisticated authorship of my understandings. I did not comport to the narrative that the schools and teachers like Mrs. Forrest would have told of my education, but I cannot fault her for presuming linearity; in the end, such thinking may be inescapable.

The first source of inevitability is narrative necessity itself, and it is partly out of this necessity that we cannot easily comprehend that someone could have been right-all-along or long-since woke. It is the reason why pep rallies feature recovering drug addicts and not people who have never succumbed to substance abuse. It is perhaps a reason for

the virulently anti-intellectual tendency of American politics and culture that Isaac Asimov called the "cult of ignorance." In order to educate, we must not only presume ignorance but rely on its continued, albeit diminishing, presence. The necessitousness of narrative also allows us, as teachers, to abrogate our personal responsibility towards students who do not readily comport with the narrative. We distance ourselves from this denial of lived-experience by rationalizing its cause, not as a fault in our own pedagogy, but as a flaw of our students' essential character. Despite this, educational narrative is also couched in notions of democracy and equality. It is not merely that we must progress from ignorance to wisdom by following the proper course, but that any individual's wisdom that is too easily gained is an affront to the idea that we must all be equally capable. Anyone who violates the narrative will come under what Liu (2011) called "a pervasive suspicion of rights, privileges, knowledge and specialization."

Perhaps my teachers were justified in their suspicion.

One of the enduring tactics of education I experienced was the purposeful promotion of ignorance; by holding back knowledge of self and other— certainly race, gender, and sexuality, but also cultures, languages, religions, political systems, economic realities, etc.— schools might limit students' agency by restricting what Davies called "the range of possibilities understood by the group as possibilities" (2003, p. 9). For the teachers, this mostly seemed to be a way of insulating them from uncomfortable student questions and isolating them from parental disapproval. Only a select few of my teachers openly embraced the idea that they were promoting certain ways of seeing, thinking, and

being in the world by denying *all* other[69], but nearly all of them assumed that what they saw as normal was also natural and inevitable. There is some evidence that students would have policed themselves by their own conceptions of normality regardless of their teacher's pedagogies; Davies (2003), for example, had found that merely asking students to deconstruct dominant discourses had little effect on their perceptions of gender roles. Even exposing students to alternate discourses did not create the conditions in which students would actively embrace an alternative.

If we are to see students not as singularly knowable individuals made malleable by our actions but as fully-realized, complex persons replete in non-unitary multiplicity we cannot blithely expect that they would espouse any discourse at odds with what Foucault called the "unitary living plurality" (2003, p. 258). New discourses and new knowledge might complicate the self, yet remain subsumed so long as they maintain their alterity. Where students are *individuals*, the disciplinary regime they are objects of enforces a seamless reality with no possible externality (Foucault, 2003); as such, actions are either normal or abnormal within that singular reality. Alternatives to the usual ways of seeing and being in the world, no matter how viable, are either unreal and outside of the field of possibility or remain possible but are deviant. Especially in the current

[69] Although I can only speculate on the motives of the vast majority of my teachers, I will take my teachers on their word when they publicly expressed the thinking behind their pedagogies. If my experience is generalizable, then between 5% and 10% of teachers are likely to use the restriction of knowledge as a pedagogy.

political environment, it is even more likely that students will be treated as *dividuals* that are valued only for their component attributes as a commodifiable mass of fragmented, incoherent data (Deleuze, 1992). Students cannot be expected to replace a recognition of themselves in their present social milieu with a re-evaluation or "re-cognition" (Davies, 2003) of their socially situated identity when doing so might disrupt a sense of wholeness with their conception of self or, in the Foucauldian sense, with reality. In part, this resistance may be an illusory artifact of imposing a binary on students whose experience of the world is not dichotomous but "undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 6). Despite the apparent resistance, it is reasonable to conclude that exposing students to alterity creates the possibility, if never the probability, that students might eventually come to reject their prior normalization of the world. That learning or change does not take place in front of us in a certain moment does not mean that it will not or cannot occur at some point.

If exposure to alterity creates opportunity, the opposite is similarly likely: restricting access to alternative discourses or deferring and denying students authority to intend to and author their own experiences reduces but does not eliminate, the probability of students becoming other. According to Foucault, "The specificity of modern racism, or what gives it its specificity, is not bound up with the mentalities, ideologies, or lies of power. It is bound up with the technique of power, with the technology of power" (Foucault, 2003, p. 258). I contend that the use of the techniques and technology of power extends beyond racism to include all, or nearly all, forms of oppression and control. As such, the several State and Corporate apparatus, and even the disciplinary

actions of a small Southern woman teaching English at a suburban middle school create the conditions in which students perceive that normal is natural and that anything abnormal is not merely alternate or deviant but unnatural, aberrant and abhorrent. This is particularly damning if, as per Foucault, we cannot logically maintain multiple manifestations of normality. In that case, the rejection of other is both inevitable and absolute. If Deleuze and Guattari are correct, however, and our shifting situations and social relations are continuously re-territorialized as an assemblage, then we may able to rationally and non-rationally hold to any number of normalized ideals, even if our expression, performance, or rejection of them is tied to our experience of the world in any given context and at any given time.

There are many like Mrs. Forrest who have served in classrooms and who would restrict the field of possibilities. Their concern is not opening-up experience but closing-down opportunity, not promoting understanding but withholding what they see as forbidden knowledge. They are not teachers, and I cannot in good conscience call them such. They are pedants. They seek, not merely to curtail alterity, but to directly prohibit expressions of otherness and establish conditions in which expression becomes unlikely. They do so through fragmentation and isolation. This isolation began with but is no longer limited to, the ruse of Cartesian duality that would separate the mind perceiving the world from the embodied experience of it, but now proceeds with the fragmentation of the mind into a dissoluble collection of both admirable and execrable attributes. By isolating the less-acceptable impulses from more desirable aspects of students' selves, the pedant sees themselves as a prospector sifting away sand or a surgeon cutting away dead

tissue. In treating undesirable impulses as necrotic flesh, pedants seek to keep impulse from becoming impulsion, what Dewey characterized as "a movement outward and forward of the whole organism" (1934/2005, p. 58) that "seethes as a commotion demanding utterance" (p. 75). Just as sobriety cannot supplant compulsion, or as time and distance cannot eradicate deep affection, there is no part of us as beings in the world that can be entirely cut away. Pedants are not often put off by the impossibility of their task, however, but wield the techniques and technologies of power certain of their moral rectitude.

Although the technologies of power have evolved as the conception of it has changed from sovereignty to discipline to control, the techniques of power remain un-evolved. Mrs. Forrest's use of detention to manage behavior is not far removed from the nineteenth-century schoolmarm who maintains discipline by having troublemakers stand in corners and face the wall until they can correct their thinking. The contemporary technique of control in which students are to "take a break" when they become disruptive is simply the latest manifestation of this exercise of authority. Rhetorically, this is meant to be different from the punishments of the past in that students initiate break-taking, it is not punitive, and it occurs in a physical location designed for calmness and comfort. This rhetoric does not match up with the reality of contemporary practice, however.

Break-taking is often initiated, not by self-aware students, but by teachers who are attending to the most minor of infractions and may intervene to redirect behavior *before* any misbehavior has occurred. While this proactive approach is acceptable and even admirable when taking a break is not a punishment, it operates under the assumption that

strong emotions, rather than being an appropriate reaction, are always harmful to the social order of the classroom. Despite the claim that it is non-punitive, taking a break almost always involves reflective strategies in which students are asked to think or write about why they had to take a break and reflect upon what they can do differently. Students are thereby fragmented into worthy and unworthy components and come to understand that their embodied, affective, socially-situated selves are subject to control by an objective, rational, and isolated cognition. Seating students at a desk some distance from their classmates or their usual seat is a physical manifestation of isolation whether it is directed by a teacher or chosen by the student. Deleuze and Guattari have claimed that "everything we attribute to an age was already present in the preceding age" (1987, p. 346). In education and matters of power, this seems to be the case; all that time has changed is the level of apparent physical comfort students might experience while socially and emotionally isolated and the lack of a special cap that might mark them to other students.

In all the applications of power described above, pedants use the banking concept of education described by Freire as a source of control. Banking education requires that students remain containers to be filled, passive recipients of another's wisdom. and inert objects within another's story. By depriving students of Subject status as authors of their own phenomenality, banking education "serves the interests of the oppressors, who neither care to have the world revealed nor see it transformed" and is used "to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity" (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 73). The pedant therefore relies on subterfuge, concealing the world as-it-is to remove

any tension or conflict between how the student experiences the world and how the world is presented in State and Corporate doctrine. Because strong emotions are harmful to the social order, there can be neither outrage nor indolence, neither impulsive joy nor profound sorrow. The world, however, cannot be made affectively inert or isolated from students' lived experience but seems to reveal itself as students actively intend to it. Compartmentalization must therefore inevitably fail; students cannot be compelled to conform or to become unitary through fragmentation but are impelled by the multiplicity of experience. Authorship cannot be ultimately denied, only deferred. As Dewey said of artistic expression, "even an undefined uneasiness seeks outlet in song or pantomime, striving to become articulate" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 66).

No matter how fervently pedants seek to preserve the oppressive present, students will experience what Dewey called "com-pression" when impulsion "is thrown into commotion, turmoil" (1934/2005, p. 66). For Dewey, the "ex-pression" that emerges from the ferment of impulsion thrown into turmoil has the form of artistically or æsthetically-aware production or performance. Deleuze and Guattari allow that expression "is first of all a poster or placard" but also allow that it serves to localize expression in relation as always already in the world, a territorial relation between "the interior milieu of impulses and exterior milieu of circumstances" (1987, p. 317).

In both Dewey's writing and Deleuzoguattarian thought, expression entails action. Although "the actual medium… is of relatively minor importance" (Dewey, p. 75), the painting must be painted, the song sung, the story told. That which "seethes as a commotion demanding utterance" (p. 74) must be uttered. As a collection of utterances

and expressions seeks out its own territorial organization, it becomes a "refrain" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 323) that is recognizable in the world as a body of expression. At the same time, however, "expressiveness is not reducible to the immediate effects of an impulse triggering an action in a milieu" (p. 317); instead, it must concern the "disjunction noticeable between the code and the territory" (p. 322) or between the territory and the earth. Expression cannot simply be a creative act taken in reaction to the world, therefore, but must concern the world and the tensions between perception— that which manifests in the Subject's continual intending to the world— and conception— that which is shared with, given to, and passively received by the unthinking object. Expression arises from and acts upon the world simultaneously, reifying and negating its own existence. In effect, neither an artist nor a student nor any thinking being can be either Subject or object alone but are always moving through the shifting territories, emerging from and driven back into the interior and exterior milieus as the tension between is and ought impels them to action. But what then becomes of our authorship when we feel the seething pull but resist the tide? What becomes of an utterance we dare not speak?

I had learned about homosexuality as a child, but what I learned was not that people could experience love or sexual desire for other people with the same gender. What I learned is that they were sodomites, nancy-boys, sissies, queers, and queens. They were all victims of child abuse and rape who had become gay because they were raped. They were sexual deviants only out to seek their own pleasure, pedophiles and pederasts who anally raped little boys to turn them gay. They were zoophiles who kidnapped neighborhood cats and dogs and

who caused AIDS by fucking a gorilla. They were plague carriers who would infect schoolchildren by sitting on the same seats, by shaking hands, or by using the same water fountain. Above all else, they were fags who were hated by God and who deserved death and eternal damnation.

For all that they were the bogeymen of the 1980s, there were no gays in my world. Gays existed only on television and in the imagination of Anita Bryant. I lived only a half an hour outside of Atlanta, but the gay pride marches that took place there may as well have been a world away. I did not even know what a lesbian was until I was in the seventh grade when my Boy Scouts Scoutmaster became upset that a minivan full of twelve- and thirteen-year-old boys were calling each other lesbians. When he explained that lesbians were women who had sex with each other, the van went silent. We knew what sex was and how it worked[70], but I don't think any of us could quite figure out how two women could do what our fifth-grade teachers had patiently explained took a man and a woman to accomplish. I don't remember him ever once correcting them when they would tease each other for throwing like a girl or running like a faggot[71]. He never corrected anyone when anything that

[70] We had been in fifth grade and seen the filmstrip, after all.

[71] Both taunts were always accompanied by a knock-kneed stance, limp-wristed arm flailing, and laughter. I, who did not have an especially manly running gait, was occasionally targeted and thought they were being mean. Their main target was a slender boy named Robbie who quit the troop after only a few months but who remained their target for the next several years.

was less than hyper-masculine— like cooking, sewing, or even liking animals— was gay. Between the Scoutmaster and the evening news, it was clear that there were men who chose to have sex with other men and divorced women who became roommates[72]. It was clear that being gay or lesbian was a choice and that the normal, natural order of things was for boys and girls to date, fall in love, marry, and have children[73].

It was not an existential crisis, then, when I first experienced the shock of sexual attraction while locking eyes with a girl in the fifth grade. She was pretty in that coltish fifth-grade way, blonde-haired and blue-eyed with an oval face and a slender nose. We never once spoke, and we were only ever together when our two classes merged for fifth-grade sex-ed, but we did smile at each other enough that I nursed a crush on her for the next several years. It was also not surprising when I became attracted to my best friend's younger sister. Unlike my first crush, she was a brunette and had deep brown eyes that you could nearly drown in and a wit that left no doubt she would let you drown. We did speak and spent many late nights together playing pool and watching movies, nearly always with her brother present.

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[72] After his terse explanation, the Scoutmaster refused to say any more about lesbians and insisted that we should ask our own parents. None of us had, so even months later, we still had no clue how sex between women could even be possible, but thanks to talk-radio we had figured out that women only became lesbians when they were too unattractive to get a man or else were just bitter.

[73] And, importantly, to do so in that order.

She was the first girl I held hands with and the first I tried to kiss[74]. I was never very subtle, and for several years my attraction to her was a running joke amongst my friends. My third real crush, however, did cause a crisis. I had gone for a blonde, then a brunette. It was only fitting that I would fall for a redhead next, as finely-featured and as delicately built as the others, with piercing green eyes and a face full of freckles. His name was Jay.

I met Jay when we were both in seventh grade. He had never been in my circle of friends and it seemed that he had manifest from nothingness right when I needed some closeness. My first two crushes were no closer to becoming relationships then than they were at the beginning. My childhood friendships were falling away as my erstwhile friends become girl-crazy, replaced with a less-close group of guys who were, for a time at least, more interested in role-playing, video games, and plotting the destruction of the middle school. The most painful change was the loss of my longest-term friend, a boy named DJ, who went from being a companion and confidante to being a bully nearly overnight[75]. Then, at the same time

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[74] An attempt that I will forever feel sorry for.

[75] I eventually surmised that his first girlfriend had persuaded him that I was gay. They thought it would be funny to try and convince me that a girl in my science class was interested in me, arrange a fake date, and then see if I would show up. If I didn't, I was clearly a fag. If I did, they'd still get a laugh out of it. I was suspicious for several reasons, beginning with her knowing things about my family that DJ knew and my other classmates didn't and ending with her being unwilling to even say "hello" the day before our 'date' was supposed to take place.

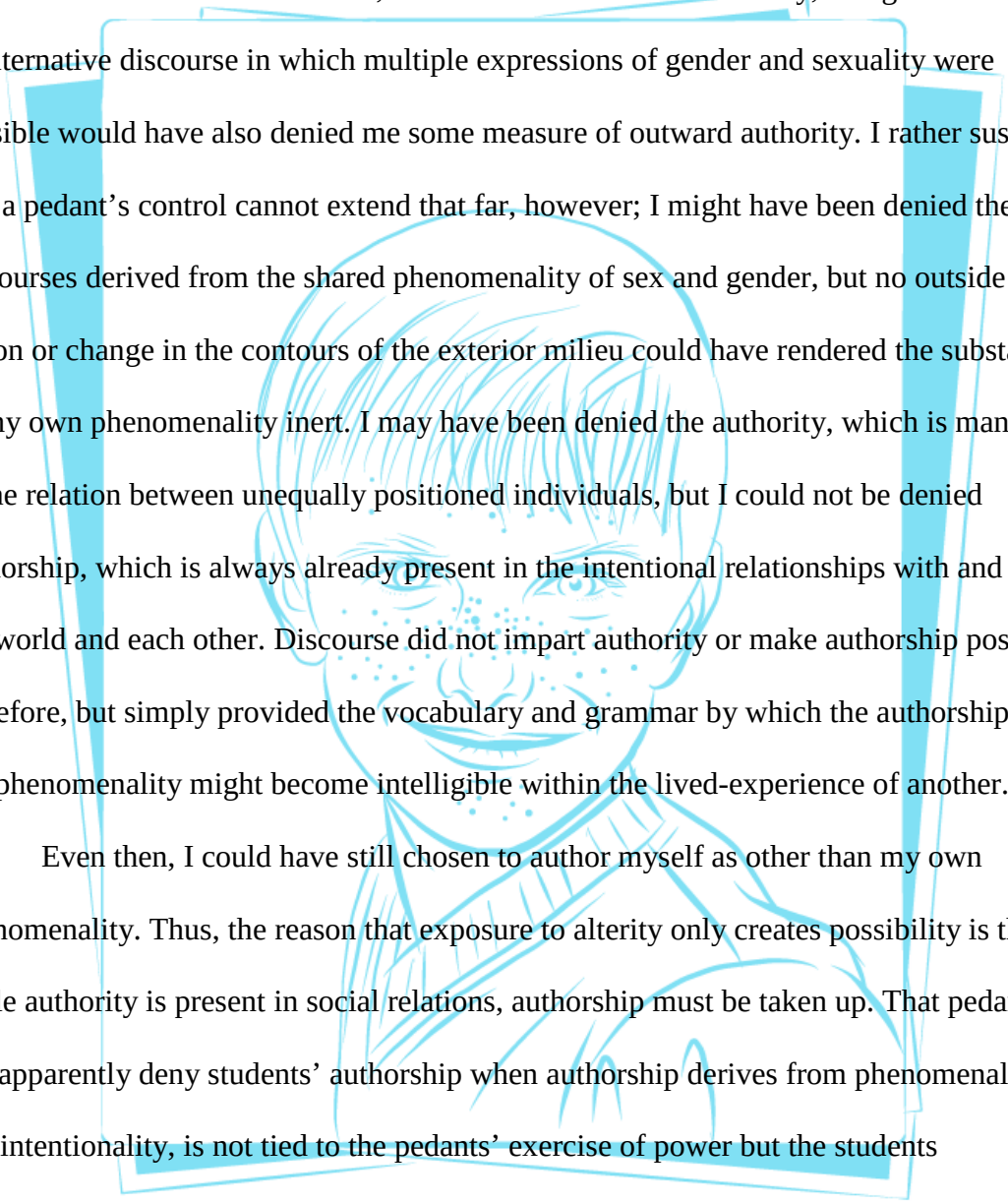
I was feeling betrayed by former friends who had left me behind, by a body that would not let me experience the world with any certainty, and by teachers who were desperate not to let me get ahead, I found Jay.

Our relationship never amounted to much and it did not last long. It was physically playful in a way that none of my relationships with women would be, but with none of the shoulder-punching machismo that marked most of my male friendships. We were only thirteen, and neither of us was ready for romance. We simply cared for each other more deeply than boys usually did. Jay was the first person to buy me a gift for no reason other than he thought I would like it[76]. Had he not had to move away only a few months after we met, I imagine that our relationship would have continued and perhaps become something else. But I like to think that if it had, that it would not have been adolescent experimentation, but another evolution of the closeness we already shared.

I sometimes wondered if this I not-quite-romance with another boy was inevitable, or if it was something about Jay, or even something in myself, that made it possible. Either way, it brought it sharp focus some of the things I had not been ready to understand when I had first read Marion Zimmer Bradley, Robert Heinlein, and many other science fiction and fantasy authors as a child. From them, I learned that there were a great many sorts of relationships that were possible, even when they were not permissible

[76] It was a chunk of malachite he bought while on a trip to see the Barringer Crater in Arizona with his mother, presented to me when he returned in a padded box tied with a silver ribbon. Perhaps I was too quick to dismiss the romantic impulse.

according to archaic concepts of morality and sin. The conservative counter-argument about this experience might be that such questionable literature empowered deviance and that without access to those books, I would still be normal. Certainly, being denied access to alternative discourse in which multiple expressions of gender and sexuality were possible would have also denied me some measure of outward authority. I rather suspect that a pedant's control cannot extend that far, however; I might have been denied the discourses derived from the shared phenomenality of sex and gender, but no outside action or change in the contours of the exterior milieu could have rendered the substance of my own phenomenality inert. I may have been denied the authority, which is manifest in the relation between unequally positioned individuals, but I could not be denied authorship, which is always already present in the intentional relationships with and in the world and each other. Discourse did not impart authority or make authorship possible, therefore, but simply provided the vocabulary and grammar by which the authorship of my phenomenality might become intelligible within the lived-experience of another.



Even then, I could have still chosen to author myself as other than my own phenomenality. Thus, the reason that exposure to alterity only creates possibility is that, while authority is present in social relations, authorship must be taken up. That pedants can apparently deny students' authorship when authorship derives from phenomenality and intentionality, is not tied to the pedants' exercise of power but the students internalizing of the exterior construct of authority. There can be no alterity or otherness within the milieu of the interior; while you may always be multiple, you also cannot be other than your continuously shifting multiplicity. The internalization of pedantic

authority— whether from teachers, peers, or other sources— is, therefore, a precondition for the imposition of otherness. In trying to avoid that act of violence, students may choose to silence their alterity, voice normality, or avoid authorship altogether.

Even here we must be cautious.

One purpose of pedantry is to refute the uniqueness of students' experiences in favor of constructions of normalcy. In effect, this locates students within an exterior milieu and limits their capacity to territorialize interiority to only such things as already have the semblance of exteriority. Requiring that they defer to the lived experience of another may be noble or generous[77]; that they should deny their phenomenality, however, is not selfless but self-less. The outright dismissal of student authorship is nothing less than the rejection of the students themselves. At the same time, however, complete interiority is inherently narcissistic, denying the experience of the self in the world by, in essence, presuming that there is no world. Teachers, cannot allow their students to fall into solipsism or turn the necessitous uncertainty about the multiplicity and variability of shared experience into an abstemious certainty of the singularity of mind in which authorship has no purpose. It may be that the pedantry of the former is more common in schools than the Cartesian sophistry of the latter, but both are problematic. Both are also intrinsic to teaching. Every teacher, in the midst of intending to their own lived through-ness, will undoubtedly defer— or leverage their authority for another purpose and

[77] In critical pedagogy, this may be the only mechanism by which privileged individuals can come to understand marginality.

unintentionally deny— their students' authorship. Every teacher who attempts to utilize her students' lived experiences will encounter a moment when that experience is apparently unique and cannot be readily taken up by their peers. Rather than being an unpardonable violence against students, however, such moments help create the tension and com-pression that is the necessary impetus for students to choose to consciously author their phenomenality. Authorship is an antidote to both pedantry and sophistry; that students are able to author themselves is vital even if that authorship never enters the formal relations of composition, performance, production, or expression.

"I am bi."

Can I have been, or be, bisexual if I never spoke those words?

I was eight when I had noticed that mutual oral gratification was possible for both men and women and had horrified one of the neighborhood women when she saw me using a pair of He-Man figures to demonstrate the idea to a group of giggling boys. I was ten when I first read that "sin lies only in hurting other people unnecessarily. All other 'sins' are invented nonsense. (Hurting yourself is not sinful—just stupid)" (Heinlein, 1973/1988, p. 352). I was twelve when I knew that I was normal[78], thirteen when I met Jay and was still thirteen when I

[78] Although I had long since embraced the idea of being "weird," weirdness still existed within normal. Normality was invisible and I, like many people my age, had no concept of being White, cis, or straight.

realized normalcy was only for other people. I had experienced love, longing, and loss[79], not curtailed by gender but expanded by the willingness to find beauty and joy in the presence of others and sadness at their absence. But even though my experiences had changed how I saw myself, I did not speak of it.

In part I did not claim the bisexual label because of the rhetoric surrounding it: that bisexuality did not exist, or that it did exist but only as youthful experimentation, that bi men were just gay men who didn't want to admit to being gay or couldn't decide, and that bis were straight men who were confused or were just greedy switch-hitters looking to score. I cannot remember an epiphany of having been straight and realizing I was bi; I was, instead, always myself. But, having attained some measure of self-awareness and the contentment and discomfort that it brought, why could I not say "bi?"

Although I did not believe the claim that one longing look, one touch, or one kiss could "turn" a man gay, I was not entirely immune to gender policing. I remember being quite fond of an all-girl band that my sister introduced me to and being overwhelmingly embarrassed when she told one of my friends about it. It did not help that I still wore my relative's hand-me-downs[80] or had started to grow my hair out, abandoning the crisp bowl-cut of my youth that had once been a sign of my friendship with DJ. The funny walk that I'd had since I was very little suddenly took on extra meaning. My fondness for classical music

[79] Probably more and more deeply than the same peers who thought I could not have felt anything because I did not date.

[80] Visible along with my ratty shoe in Figure 4.

and Renaissance art over grunge rock and football was another clue. I wrote poetry, composed music, and delighted in drawing classical figures with elaborately draped clothing. Even when I drew upon more hetero-normed ways of writing and drawing, I could not escape judgments about my burgeoning sexual identity.

In one case, I drew a rather offensive caricature of DJ that portrayed him and his heavily-moussed bowl-cut as Captain Helmet, the Yuppie Avenger[81]. I was cautious enough not to put his name anywhere on it, but the boys that were looking over my shoulder knew exactly who I was caricaturing and understood the context as they too had been bullied by DJ.

I nonetheless have no defense for disparaging DJ in that fashion; while he could have probably used a great deal less product in his hair, that is far from the worst thing eighth-grade boys have ever done. He could do nothing about the wealth he was born into or the good luck the always seemed to accompany it. If he possessed no altruism and confused condescension with compassion, that probably had more to do with how he was raised than any quirk of personality. It didn't matter that I was reacting to be taunted— this time for

[81] DJ was not a young, upwardly-mobile professional with pretensions of being a nouveau-riche socialite. He was sometimes callous about money but not very like his mother, who once held a dinner party for the sole purpose of impressing her neighbors with her china, and even bought the china after the invitations went out. Whether he was a yuppie himself or not, I was beyond jealous; I was covetous of his toys, his clothes, his house, and all the things wealth made possible.

correcting the science teacher, Mr. Trapper, and thinking that I was "*so* smart[82]"— I still should not have drawn it. I should not have allowed it to be passed around the round table where the four of us[83] were avoiding doing any work while the teacher concentrated her efforts on everyone else. I certainly should not have allowed my drawing to leave my custody.

I next saw it at lunch. Captain Helmet had been given horns, bloodshot eyes, and a wispy six-hair mustache. At some point, he also gained a speech bubble with the text, "I'm a DORK!" It made my classmates laugh and I'll admit that I laughed along with them. At some point, either DJ or his friends got ahold of it. The drawing was returned to me at the beginning of the last class of the day heavily modified even from the additions that I had seen at lunch. Captain Helmet had gained acne spots, three lonely chin whiskers, and a black eye but had also lost a tooth. Added text made sure that we knew the facial hair was "not real whiskers" and that he was wearing "girls clothes." The passive-aggressiveness of the original drawing had been sacrificed, and a label added so that anyone seeing it would now know that Captain Helmet was not DJ, but Tim. The speech bubble had also been changed. Captain Helmet now proclaimed, "I'm a FAG!!!"

I have sometimes wondered what the proper response should have been. Should I

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[82] I never claimed he was a particularly effective bully, just persistent. Had he been paying attention he could have made fun of the fact that I *had* worn my sister's hand-me-down jeans to school.

[83] "Advanced" students— meaning that we had all tested above grade level in English/Language Arts and could be safely ignored for a while.

have engaged with him, calling out his jealousy and bigotry? Perhaps, knowing that his objection to me was not actually rooted in being smart but in the dissolution of friendship, could I have made an overture of care and respect? Should I have simply ignored him or walked away? Would the teachers who had thus far shown me neither compassion nor humanity show me any sympathy? Perhaps I could have treated it like an angry letter that is vital to write and even more vital never to send. Instead of calling him out as a bigot or defusing the conflict, however, I bullied him back[84].

Because I knew I was not entirely innocent, it didn't bother me when DJ gleefully slapped the drawing on my desk. DJ did not react well to my aplomb. I can only imagine how personally he took the ongoing insult or that so many people shared in it. I was also familiar with his handwriting and his drawing style, it was clear to me that, though many hands had contributed to mocking Captain Helmet, only one hand was responsible for renaming him and calling out his supposed sexuality. It simply did not matter because, despite DJ's attempt at deflection, it wasn't true. I remember being disappointed, not because the drawing had gone around, come back, and been repurposed, but because it became clear to me that a person I had known for years knew some of my secrets but apparently did not know *me* at

[84] And, judging by the vitriol of the final drawing, more effectively than he had bullied me.

all[85]. Instead of the reaction that DJ sought, I just shrugged. That was enough to send him into a red-faced, spittle-flecked tirade. It was also enough to draw the usually unflappable teacher, Ms. Colton, over to my desk.

I still struggle to understand why Ms. Colton acted the way she did. She had DJ take his seat and confiscated the drawing— that I expected. I had hoped that perhaps DJ might get called up and then have to explain what he'd done. I was certain that we would both be asked to explain ourselves, as often seemed to happen whenever there was a conflict between two people. That certainty began to evaporate when I noticed that she kept returning to her desk to glance at it throughout the hour. With every furtive glance and silent frown, I became a little more worried. Had she figured out that it was my drawing and thought that I had started it all? My suspicions seemed to be confirmed when the class was dismissed— everyone else, including DJ, was free to go, but I was asked to stay.

She sashayed over to me, taking up the same position DJ had less than an hour before and setting the drawing in front of me.

"Care to explain this to me, young man?" She asked, her Southern drawl thick with condescension[86].

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[85] I'm absolutely certain that DJ and his girlfriend were behind the fake date— he told her my secrets and she was the voice on the other end of the line that tried to use them.

[86] She often spoke like that. When she was the most pleased with us, she would call us, "y'all." When she was less pleased we became "young'uns," then "little boys and

"It's just a drawing," I said, trying to deflect attention away from whatever might have drawn it in the first place.

"No," she said, stabbing her finger her finger at the word 'fag,' "explain *this*."

I scrunched my brow in confusion. "DJ was trying to make fun of me," I said.

"And it doesn't bother you?"

"Well, no…" I began, intending to say that it couldn't bother me because it wasn't true.

"And how would you feel if I put this in your file?"

I don't remember how I answered her, or if I answered her with anything more than a shrug. What I remember is being distracted on the way home and maintaining that confusion for years afterward. What was it that so bothered her? Was it that she felt that I should have protested someone else trying to author me as other than I saw myself? Was it because I saw nothing wrong or insulting about being thought to be gay? Was it that she, like DJ and at least a few others, thought that I was gay? If she hadn't figured out that I had drawn the first iteration— and it seemed she hadn't— then why was she so unconcerned that one of her students was being actively bullied and so concerned that a taunt might, in some small way, be true?

For the next several years I would wrestle with the idea of "coming out" as bi. The only

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girls." It was only when she was both upset and dismissive that we became young men and young ladies. It was the Southern, middle school equivalent of a parent using all your names at once.

out bisexual I knew of was a pixie-hair girl with frosted white hair who had been outed by her boyfriend. By doing so, he became an object of admiration while she was fetishized as a source of sexual desire. The jocks, and it was nearly all athletes and boys that wanted to be athletes, were so titillated by the thought of threesomes and lesbianism that, for the three weeks the relationship lasted, they greeted him with high-fives every time he passed through the halls. She, however, was called a slut and a skank by many of the girls and by jeered at by the same group of high-fiving boys. As much as the boys wanted to see her perform for them, they also feared her threat to their masculinity. What if she stole all their girlfriends and *turned* them? What if she would do things that they wouldn't, or worse, what if she was just better at it?

I admit that coming out, being known, scared me. I knew that the male body was ugly and that the penis was silly and stupid. No girls would ever be turned-on by the sight of two men kissing. Even holding hands would be enough to make them retch. No girl I dated would be high-fived by the cheerleading squad as she walked to class or want me to "put on a show" with another guy. I will not say that being fetishized or desired by leering adolescents is positive— it is, in fact, horrifically objectifying and dehumanizing. Yet, I knew that if I were to come out and embrace the label, that I would not even get that. I would only be feared, mocked, and hated. I would be entirely dehumanized, not just being less than a fully-realized person, I would have my humanity stripped from me in the sight of my peers and become nothing more than the label itself. I would make myself an object of their derision and a target of their violence.

It was only when I became friends with Irma, an out and proud lesbian I met in AP Chemistry, that I began to see the potential of the label. The key, it seemed, was to own the

label in such a way that it became part of us without becoming us. Through her good humor, her support, and her immediate acceptance I was finally able to come out, albeit quietly, to my friends. It is what allows me to say:

> I am still me, as complex and replete as I have ever been: ambitious but fearful, hopefully contrarian, and vengefully altruistic. I am an artist and a writer. I have been a Christian, a Pagan, and an Atheist. I am an instigator and a cog in the machine. I am a teacher and a life-long student. I am a husband, a brother, a son, and a friend. I am also bisexual.

I still regret that there were no adults around who could help, no teachers who would understand or even listen. I can only imagine what pain I might have avoided had I not had a teacher for whom being bullied was of far less consequence than even being thought of as homosexual.

There are those teachers that you return to in later years, some because you hope they will be proud of all you've done or become, and some to spite their interference or incompetence. Mrs. Forrest was certainly the latter, but Ms. Colton was neither of those. I would stop by the middle school exactly once after I had graduated to see if my presence had made any difference at all[87] in Mrs. Forrest's teaching. She was, I had thought, an effective enough teacher who could become remarkable if she could only conquer her pedantry. Ms. Colton had never been an especially effective teacher to begin with. In my opinion, she had

[87] Apparently, it had. Mrs. Forrest would ask where I was headed to for college and recommend that I think about getting a teaching license.

ceded her claim to the title of "teacher" when she embraced the ignorant bigotry of an eighth-grade bully. Instead of providing protection or offering advice, she adopted adolescent taunts as truth. She became a bully herself.

As for DJ, once our paths were disentangled there would be neither recrimination nor forgiveness; having become certain of betrayal, I would have nothing more to do with him. Although I would not speak to *him* after eighth-grade, DJ made a point to speak to *me* twice: once when he managed to obtain a higher score on a state-sponsored writing test[88], and once years later when he wanted to brag about getting a story published.

In some small way, then, it showed what was behind his bullying: my mere presence in his world authored him as something less than what he wanted to be. Even if the writing test was not valid, and the scoring of it beset by the same problems that would later plague the ACT and SAT essay tests, five points proved to DJ that I wasn't "*so* smart" and that he was the better writer. Perhaps he was, and remains, the better writer[89], but there were a few things in

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[88] The Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) was a timed exam in which students were to handwrite responses to randomly selected prompts. Raw scores were determined by a pair of readers— who, while trained, were not educators— then scaled to iron-out differences in the difficulty of the prompts (Brigman, Brooks, Kirkland, Rawlston, & Taylor, 2001). The difference between our scaled scores was a matter of some five points, DJ having scored at "Level VII" in all domains and I having scored at a "Level VI" in one.

[89] He is certainly more prolific.

how he chose to brag that struck me.

First, he seemed to have no understanding that he had been a bully. In his email to me, our friendship was something that passively fell apart, perhaps owing to the entropy of distance and the turbulence of adolescence. The dissolution had no relation to his jealousy over my "giftedness" and artistic ability, or to my envy about his family's wealth. Instead, it was just another one of those things "to be regretted." He also said he had wanted to write a story about fathers and sons, friends, and the possibilities of redemption. After our friendship collapsed, he witnessed another friend struggle to come out to a father who was intolerant of homosexuality. He saw the conditionality of love, the specter of abuse, and the tragic prospect of a broken home. In befriending me years earlier, he saw the impact of poverty and physical disability— but all this he saw only from afar.

DJ seemed to see himself as something of a working-class hero, "something to be" (Lennon, 1970/2010) that was other than privileged wealthy, White, cis-male, Christian, or heterosexual without negating or giving up that privilege. He presented himself as both the erudite author, risen to prominence on the basis of his singular talent, and the gritty Southerner, a product of a rough-and-tumble blue-collar upbringing. DJ had witnessed— and participated in— many of the same dehumanizing experiences that I had. He had, before we ended our friendship, been a sounding-board for the escalating social and political disconnection I, and others, experienced. As with Davies' students, however, simply being exposed to alterity or to the general insufficiency of discourse for explaining the world could not make him "woke" when waking would have undermined both his view of the world and his conception of self.

Without an ongoing recognition of privilege, he could not author himself in a way that did not diminish the experience of those who had experienced privation based on race, religion, gender, sexuality, or economic status— such hardships would always be exteriorly territorialized, always *other*. He was a tourist, a visitor, an Orientalist at once fascinated by and fearful of those who lived in ways his Whiteness would not allow him to comprehend. That he remained blind to the phenomenality of his own experience and unaware of the harms that he had helped to work in the world suggests that he was woke, but not still-waking. Thus, even in reaching out as the mature writer he was becoming, he could not escape also being the resentful seventeen-year-old I once knew him to be, proud that he had finally done what I had not, aware that bullying was a force in the world but ignorant that he was himself a bully.

This might be unsurprising if it is a given that the assemblage of self cannot be reterritorialized in such a way that it fails to encompass or enfold prior territorializations; we cannot be except as we have been. The constancy and consistency of self is belied, however, by the actions of those who Deleuze and Guattari characterized as "romantic artists" who "operate directly upon the territoriality of the assemblage, and open it onto a land that is eccentric, immemorial, or yet to come" (1987, p. 505). In order to imagine a future that cannot yet be or to "open the territorial assemblage onto other assemblages," they must also be able to imagine the immemorial, not merely the ancient past but the im-memorial: that which never occurred except as "lines of deterritorialization" (p. 504). As the romantic artist intends to the experience of the territory itself, "he or she

experiences [that territory] as necessarily lost, and experiences him- or herself as an exile, a voyager, as deterritorialized, *driven back into the milieus*" (p. 339).

It may be that there can be no authorship of self without such reimagining, without intending to the phenomenality of personal experience— which is inherently interior—as if it is an aspect of the exterior milieu or interiorizing the phenomenality of others. It may also be that exterior territorializations of authorship compel the author to embrace more humble beginnings than he or she had, in fact, experienced in order to comply with narrative necessity. Awareness of privilege, or that wakefulness is an ongoing process and not state to be agreed upon and arrived at, might curtail authorship by stripping the narratives of the already-privileged of their narrative power. While it may comport with the desire to enfold experience within a plotted structure, reimagining normality as alterity and taking up the otherness of others denies those others the expression of their own authorship, marginalizing their voices by insisting that what they might be impelled by and compressed by is neither impulsion nor compression but merest impulse or else non-existent.

Authoring others is an exercise of authority fraught with potential. What DJ, Mrs. Forrest, and Ms. Colton shared was an authorial approach that added and subtracted from the whole, altered reality to fit their conception, and authored others in ways that disrupted the authorship of those others' multiple selves. The disruption of authorship that I experienced was not always intentional, but was sometimes reactionary or even later regretted, but it seems that it all-too-frequently proceeded from a singularity of vision that insists that people and the world can be wholly known and, having been

defined, can be constrained by that definition. This is not to say that authority cannot be leveraged for less oppressive ends. Such disruption might provide needed tension: a necessary foil, an obstacle that must be overcome, or a structure to rail against. Being punished for my political identity channeled my impulsion to work in the world, placing me in a state of compression that would first find an expressive outlet in writing and visual art. Being authored as both other and other-than-I-was, having my own authorship deferred as I sought personal safety, and having it denied by those who were uncomfortable with the world beyond their own authorial influence convinced me that it was no longer enough to be disruptive for my own ends. I, who hated school, who felt so terribly alone that I cried myself to sleep, and who despised many of my teachers and their limited views of the world would have to become a teacher.

I could play the game, perhaps, but only so that I could change it from within.

Figure 5. “Unitled (Sunset),” student work sample, diptych, tempera paint on white sulfite paper, 2004.
Students were required to demonstrate a mastery of color mixing from a limited palette as well as a minimum of two painting techniques within the picture plane; the painting could be divided by object, based on depth, to establish a focal point using contrast, or as a diptych.

Chapter Four: Disrupting Authority

In one of my first education courses, I was told that it was the good students, those who succeeded within the structure of schooling, who became teachers and who then blindly perpetuated structure with its biases and injustices intact. They were the reason that change was not merely slow to happen but was routinely stymied and set back. What makes this especially problematic is that they are not, by and large, bad people. Yet I did not see myself as a "good student," and I knew a great many of my teachers who would agree with that assessment. What about the trouble-makers, the instigators, the disrupters, the bad influences, the problem children, be they loners or class clowns? What happens when those of us who never belonged choose to work within the system that stifled or dehumanized them?

Let me tell you my part of our story.

My first direct teaching experience, like that of many who were marginalized in their own education, was not in a school. I volunteered at a now-defunct interactive science museum in Atlanta, Georgia for over three years starting at age fourteen. I first volunteered at Sci-Trek— officially designated The Science and Technology Museum of Atlanta— as part of a group of Star Trek fans from the International Federation of Trekkers there to help run the " Star Trek Federation Science" exhibit. Initially, my interest stemmed solely from fandom; volunteering meant gaining early access to the exhibit and having an excuse to wear a costume. At first, the volunteer coordinators didn't know what to do with me. I was several years younger than the next most junior volunteer and they were clearly hesitant to let a middle-schooler perform a physics demonstration or run an exhibit. They may have also

thought that I would be like most of the other fans that had volunteered, there for the opening weekend of the exhibit but only sporadically available after that. As a result, I floated from station to station: demonstrating chroma key compositing in front of a green screen and using an acrylic sphere filled with what I suspected was dish soap and glitter to simulate the atmospheric banding of Saturn and Jupiter.

I had seen other volunteers treat the museum like it was a carnival, an indoor playground where the experience was more important than the science behind it. There was something, I knew, to the power of joy and wonder but I wanted to give them at least a little more. At every station I was assigned, most people were content to simply try it out and move on. But there were always the few who would ask how it worked. There was little in the way of signage and even less in our volunteer guidebook for the exhibit, however, and I was disappointed that I simply didn't know enough to help assuage their curiosity. Yet I was clever and persistent.

I remember talking to my father on the way home that first weekend and venturing that the simulated Jovian atmosphere could not operate the way Jupiter's did and that the banding could not be the same as the counter-rotating zones of wind. Instead, I surmised, the plastic globe must be filled with several immiscible liquids of different densities and that the varying surface speeds at the different latitudes must allow the denser liquids to band near the equator. It must, I thought, be like the experiment where the teacher swings around the bucket of water. When we got home my father brought out an old physics textbook and turned to a section on centripetal force. There, in rather archaic and nearly impenetrable prose, was a description of an experiment with a water- and mercury-filled glass sphere; I was,

in essence, correct while also being wrong in very nearly every particular. When we returned the next weekend, I was armed with enough knowledge to answer questions about spinning liquids, green screens, and a few other stations as well. I was not prepared, however, for the station they asked me to man.

I was to spend my shift helping people experience the moon's gravity by means of a ramp, a padded wall, and an auto mechanic's shop creeper. I had not been trained but I was assured that there was nothing to it. I just needed to make sure no one abused the equipment or fell getting in or out. That wasn't going to be enough to satisfy me, but with no one around, no physics textbook at hand, and with the usual minimally helpful signage, what could I do? The only clue came from trying it out. As I lay back on the creeper and kicked away from the padded wall I could feel the force of gravity pulling me down, but it seemed as if most of the force was directed towards the ramp with only a little directed towards the wall. When I got back up, I looked carefully at the setup. The ramp was shallow, perhaps 15° and the wall was perpendicular to the ramp. An unusually helpful sign stated that the moon had one-sixth Earth gravity. In that moment, it all just made sense: the ratio of the Moon's gravity to the Earth's was equal to the ratio of 15° to 90°.

I suppose that I could have told the museum patrons of this fact and let them become the recipients of my realization, but I had never so enjoyed received wisdom as much as I had enjoyed the moment of epiphany. I may have also felt some lingering uncertainty; I hadn't run my thinking by anyone and knew that I could still be wrong. I wanted to know if anyone else would come to the same conclusion if they were presented with the same facts from which to deduce an answer. Instead of telling them what I thought was true, I

incorporated questions into my patter.

"Before you go in, let me ask you a question. If you were to lay flat on the ground, how much of gravity would you feel on your back and how much on the bottom of your feet? And what if you were standing, what then? So, if you wanted to experience half on you back and half on your feet? Well, the moon has one-sixth Earth's gravity—" or even "so how do you think this works?"

It seemed to work. Being enthusiastic drew them in. Slowing them down before they began caused a line to start. The line drew more people who were seemingly curious enough about what could cause a line to form that they would willingly stand in line to find out what it was. All of them, individually or in small groups, became my first students. I had the chance to see that, no matter how the question was asked, some people figured it out from the questions alone, some only when they were laying on the creeper, and some only after they had bounced around. Some few never seemed to get it at all, but they also seemed to be the ones who were the most reluctant to answer questions and the least likely to follow directions. For each of them, there also seemed to be one or two who would linger, asking more questions, including about other stations. One such person was a middle-aged White man with receding gray hair, enormous glasses, and a kind, crooked-toothed smile. It was near the end of my shift and the crowds had thinned. Because there was no line as he took off his loafers, I gave him the full patter. I remember that he was quicker to respond that the other patrons.

Then, as he was bounding and leaping crabwise on the shallow ramp, he started to ask me questions, "If lying down you experience zero-g on your feet and one g standing up, at

what angle would you have to recline to experience the gravity on Mars?"

I ventured that it would be the proportion of Mars gravity to Earth gravity multiplied by 90°, but that I did not know what Mars gravity was. I should have suspected something when he was able to tell me that the surface gravity on Mars was approximately 38% of the surface gravity on Earth. Using his number, I estimated that the angle of the ramp would need to be a little more than double, perhaps 34 to 35 degrees.

He smiled, then asked, "And what if we wanted to experience what it's like on Saturn or Jupiter where the gravity is much higher?"

We could not, I said, from the incline alone. Instead, I proposed that the only ways to do would either increase the resistance to jumping and increase the acceleration downward through some kind of spring or bungee or else to have each person wear a weight suit customized to each person.

He patted me benevolently on the shoulder and asked to speak to the manager.

I found out later that he complemented me to the volunteer coordinator and recommended that I consider a career in teaching. I did not know that this unassuming man I was talking to was a physics professor at the University of Georgia, nor that his recommendation would carry so much weight. For the immediate future, it meant that I had earned enough trust to run the exhibits unsupervised. It also convinced me that much of what I had experienced as "school" was any number of missed opportunities and wasted potential. As a Sci-Trek volunteer and a perennially bad student, I saw my approach as the only logical one. As a newly licensed teacher, I would conceptualize my

approach as somewhere between Socrates and Dewey. In my thinking now, I could see the types of questioning I was using as directing museum visitor's phenomenality.

I feel that it would disingenuous to claim that only my take on the experience is what matters. I hope that I have drawn you somewhat into it, that I have leveraged the possibility of Geertz's "thick description" (1973) and that there is not just meaning, but meaningfulness in the telling. Even within my own multiplicity I can imagine other conclusions than directed phenomenality: the fluidity of teacher and student roles, the importance of just one good teacher, the necessity of mentorship, the relevance of education as process and as experience, and the need for that experience and process to be grounded in knowledge but not solely to produce knowledge. I would draw one more as the teacher and thinker I am becoming: Authority does not have to come from asserting authorship but can come from allowing others to author their own experiences. What conclusions would you draw?

Authorship and Affect

In my first full year of teaching, I was approached by my department chair who wanted to express his sympathies. "I tried to get her in my class," he said, "but they won't let her in Art 3 and Clark[90] doesn't want to make a new section just for her."

'Her' turned out to be a young woman named Natalie. Natalie was 19 at the time and technically still a freshman— a technicality her mother disputed to anyone who would listen. Our principal, the Clark my department chair had spoken of, had offered Natalie's mother the

[90] The names of individuals featured in this chapter have been changed.

possibility that she would never graduate; instead, he thought she should be placed in self-contained and occupational therapy classes and given a certificate of attendance. Her mother insisted otherwise, going so far as to threaten to sue the school, all the administrators and every teacher who had ever taught Natalie.

I was petrified.

I should say that I wasn't concerned about disability. My mother had multiple sclerosis since she was 18 and struggled with it until she passed away at the age of 69. One of my earliest friends, Ramsay, died from complications of cerebral palsy when he was nine and I was seven. I am also deaf in one ear and with a minor hearing impairment in the other. Disability wasn't the problem.

Natalie had Down Syndrome. One of the main aspects of DS is neoteny, in which the body retains some infantile or childlike features as an adult. In Natalie's case, this meant that she had the body of a six-year-old girl. She also had poor eyesight, was nearly deaf, had difficulty speaking, a heart condition, and moderate intellectual disability. Unfortunately, she was also obsessive, compulsive, ill-tempered, and vindictive.

I did not protest having her in the class, met with her mother, and— per her mother's wishes— had her work on simple crafts of the sort normally given to very young children. I had the opportunity before Natalie showed up and several times during the semester when she was out for doctor's appointments, to try to help the other students see why Natalie had every right to be there and why they had to at least be polite to her. I especially relied on a trio of senior girls who acted as Natalie's peer-group in class.

Natalie did very little work for much of the first quarter and, with frequent

absenteeism, always seemed to be coming in as the students were either starting or finishing something— the times when I was the most pressed to give attention to everyone and could not give Natalie the time and attention I still believe she needed. The girls were of some help here, because they were using the Crafts class as a free elective and would never take a more advanced course, they could help Natalie stay focused. This worked reasonably well until the end of that quarter. At that point, none of the three girls could deal with Natalie anymore. They found that they liked working on Crafts instead of babysitting a nineteen-year-old in a six-year-old's body who picked the skin off her lips and flicked it at them for an hour-and-a-half every other day. I thanked them for their help and tried to think of something else to do.

A strange thing happened at that point. The girls didn't just want a break from helping Natalie, they no longer wanted to be near her. Compassion had given way to frustration and frustration to refusal. Natalie, who did not understand why the girls didn't want to be around her, still looked up to them. I explained to her, as best I could, that it wasn't that they didn't like her anymore— a white lie I believe I was entitled to tell— it was that they wanted to be able to work on their own projects and learn about crafts. I expected the worst. Her reputation told me to expect her vindictive side to come roaring out. She had always been destructive— tearing, spitting, biting, flicking, et cetera, whenever something didn't go her way— but now something else happened.

She was constructive. For the first time, she wanted to do what the other kids were doing.

I modified every assignment so that it could be done on a smaller scale and with kid-friendly materials— no knives, white glue only, stubby scissors, and so on. I modified

assessment so that getting done was worth far more than what got done. Even then, I still had to convince her that her smaller assignment was what the other kids were doing; I could not let her in on her own modifications. Clark allowed me to the freedom to do as I wished, provided that I would give Natalie nothing less than a C and that he would never hear any complaints about it. That meant I also had to convince her mother that there was more value in Natalie attempting work that was related but at her level, than in simply keeping busy.

She worked for the rest of the semester, driven as I had never seen her before. The rest of the class finished six projects. She finished six; smaller and simpler, perhaps, but with the same basic materials and to meet the same goals. I will not say that her work would win awards. The crafts she produced for me were at once some of the worst and some of the best I can lay claim to— the worst because there is a limit to what a six-year-old with poor motor control can do in a high-school crafts class, the best because it was the most earnest.

After that semester, the administration created a special section of visual art with an enrollment cap of one. From there out, Natalie became the responsibility of my department chair. She was hard to read but seemed to like her time with him so much more than she did her semester with me. He got hugs every day. I got one here and there, normally when I was looking the other way. Her mother was happy, we didn't get sued and, eventually, Natalie graduated after much finagling of grades and relabeling of courses. But even though I never was one of the few teachers Natalie insisted on having, I can proudly say that I was one of the few for whom she actually tried.

This series of events triggered a change in my approach to teaching. As a beginning teacher, I was mindful of many things that my own teachers had always

ignored, but I still unthinkingly assumed that students were either motivated by excellence— education classes that talked about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation only served to support this idea— or were simply unmotivated. I had not considered that a student's emotional state or feelings of belonging were far more central to the willingness to learn and the desire to improve than any metacognitive understanding of their own intellectual development. As I return to this foundational moment in my own teaching, I can see connections with authorship, who we allow to have authority, how that authority manifests in our classrooms, and how the of our students' abilities intrinsically alter our acceptance of their authorship and our willingness to share pedagogical authority.

In some ways, I think this could have only ever happened in an arts class. In part, this conclusion is historically valid; in her then fourteen years of public education, Natalie had never before sought to become a part of the community of her classes. It cannot have been the subject alone, however; having her own private section allowed her to be in the studio with her preferred teacher but it also further isolated her from her peers. I wonder if her increased engagement would have continued if she had been allowed to retake the beginning and intermediate art courses for credit. While Natalie exaggerated the degree of difference, beginning high-school art classes are inherently more diverse than most other subject areas when it comes to ability; some students show up having had no art instruction for seven or eight years, others with full instruction, and still others with years of private tutelage. In contrast, higher level classes are largely homogeneous with students self-selecting to learn alongside others with similar abilities and interests. Along with the normal variances found in school such as limited English

proficiency, this situation makes differentiating extraordinarily difficult when done by contemporary methods like scaffolding or sheltered instruction.

Beyond the effect on lesson-planning, however, it directly affects student authorship and authority. With such a diverse range of skill and ability, students only rarely benefited from the peer effect. Instead, students with more experience and greater skill often resisted growing in skill and ability because they were already well beyond capable. Lacking any authority within the traditional structure of school, and stymied by a system that valued conformity, students were ill-prepared for a classroom environment in which they were allowed the authority to take control of their own learning and to exercise their own æsthetic judgments. While they were sometimes comfortable authoring their phenomenality, they were often uncomfortable placing their authorship in any relation to those— like professional artists, critics, and teachers— whose authorial status could not be questioned. Students who saw themselves as less-skilled or less-experienced than their peers would further deny their own authorship, often insisting that their artwork was not-good-enough to count as a valid expression of skill. While the former had to be pushed to embrace their fullness of potential, students with the least skill and experience had to be continually coached to keep them from simply giving up.

As an art student, I had considered that students should not be graded to a single standard. Natalie catalyzed that thought; I changed my grading system so that no student was measured against an arbitrary standard or against each other. Instead, I devised a system using sketches and learning activities as benchmarks, essays and critiques as reflections and projects as indicators of growth. Even then, I was mindful that the more

capable students would perforce exhibit less growth than their less-practiced peers and that they should not be punished by entirely focus on growth. I later refined my system so that I graded students on growth only to the extent that they had room to grow with that proportion determined by an aligned pre-assessment in the form of roughs, maquettes, or thumbnail sketches. Unfortunately, the adoption of the Common Core State Standards introduced a culture of conformity into teaching that, in addition to requiring common grading metrics within Professional Learning Communities and shared assessments within departments, the implementation of new grading systems precluded differentiating or individualizing assessment. Had Common Core been implemented when Natalie was my student, I would have been forced to either assign grades she had not earned on a common rubric in order to prevent the grade from becoming a harm to her or grading her based on the shared standard within the department.

From my dealings with Natalie, I can conclude that the notion that high standards must also be common standards is intrinsically false and, rather than advancing the project of progressive education, may directly harm students. High standards cannot also be just standards when they do not allow for meaningful differentiation or divergence from expected norms. I might also conclude that a student's willingness to learn, and the degree of mastery they seek to attain, is not the rational product of metacognitive awareness or of conformity to an extrinsic standard, but an affective judgment governed by the perception of self and of others. Making educational judgments "in the best interest" of the students cannot, therefore, succeed when it is done *to* and *for* the student rather than *with* them. From this and similar experiences, I would repeatedly return to an

additional conclusion: data— and data alone— cannot drive instruction unless we broaden the realm of acceptable data to include qualitative judgments and include affective, conative, and embodied facets. What other conclusions might we draw?

Disrupted Authorship

The first time I taught my former high school students to draw from observation, I noticed that students frequently had trouble with the concept of value as a component of color. They seemed to fixate the local color of an object— i.e., the apple is red, this shirt is blue— and ignore that it manifests in the world with as a range of values, a variety of saturations, and even a number hues. By the second day of drawing, I was determined to uncover how it was that they had such a hard time understanding the way that light could fall on an object.

Frustrated by the certainty that Intermediate Visual Art students should already have understood light and shade, I grabbed a plastic apple we used for still-lives and asked my class, "What color is this apple?"

They all answered, "Red!"

Then I flipped all the lights off and into the pitch-black room asked, "What color is it now?" Some answered, "Black," or, "I can't tell," but far too many still answered, "Red!" I remember asking, with barely-disguised incredulity, how it could be red.

"Well, it's an apple. Apples are red," came the answer from the darkness. "Unless they're green," a second voice answered.

I figured that what was happening was that my students had been taught, probably very early on, that apples are red (unless they are green). They had internalized that simple

schema, and, finding that it generally worked in the world and was mutually intelligible, had never been impelled to adopt more elaborate schemata. If their being in the world was uncomplicated enough to allow that schema to persist past the point where they had experienced the impulsion to perceive the complexity of reality, I would have to compress them into complicating— what I ill-advisedly referred to as "creatively destroying"— their being in the world.

I surmised that they could cling to something like "apples are red" only if that was sufficient for them to be understood. Certainly, even as we actively perceive and understand lived complexity we still can understand that "apples are red" without having to resolve the contradiction between perception and sight or between conception and sensation. Our impulsion for our work to be read and recognizable supports semiotic methods of depiction; rather than expending effort on a completely accurate naturalistic rendering of an apple that, as in the pitch-black room, might be completely unrecognizable, the least-effort, highest-reward manner of drawing is to rely on a common sign or symbol for the apple. If, however, we impel ourselves and compel our students with the compression of temporospatial specificity, we might instill the need for more-numerous and more-complex schemata in our students. Only when a simple abstraction of *an* apple is no longer sufficient to convey the lived complexity of *this* apple at *this* moment from *this* point-of-view will students begin to intend to the repleteness of the world around them.

This meant that the Modernist obsession with abstraction within visual arts curricula— usually included under the belief that abstract art was inseparable from abstract thought— was at best misguided and at worst constrained students' capacity to accurately

perceive the empirical materials of their lived existence. It further meant that students had to be taught naturalistic methods of depiction predicated upon direct observation and produced with an awareness of the limitations of that perception. Because it seemed so evident to me, I also assumed that my students' earlier art teachers, or their lack of regular art education, were at fault. When I had the opportunity to teach elementary students, I was determined that my new students would not be disadvantaged that way, that I could teach them the foundations of visual art without falling into tropes that would later have to be unlearned. Instead, I could design experiences that would support, or even require, the development and integration of more complex schemata.

It felt strange to be teaching elementary school after having been a high school teacher for several years. I knew going in that I did not want to be *that* art teacher: the ones who always had pictures hung up in the hall or on bulletin boards, but whose student learned nothing or, worse, who would have to be untaught by their middle or high school teachers. I wanted to "plant seeds" and "lay foundations" even if I would never see the building rise or the seed sprout. As a result, I made the habit of peppering my more by-the-book lessons with one-day experiences that, I hoped, would eventually lead students to a broader understanding of visual art and the world they found themselves in.

To begin with, this meant proving that the sky was not blue.

This was a lesson designed for kindergartners and preschoolers, but it would prove so immediately successful that I soon adapted it for older elementary students as well. In its initial form, I introduced the lesson by asking students the color of things: the sun, the grass, the sky, a firetruck, a tree. Like my high-school students had before them, my little ones

answered back with the expected local colors: yellow, green, blue, red, and brown (and with green on top, my kindergartners were proud to know). The older students had enough experience with the world that I could directly ask them if this was fixed— was the sky always blue and always the same blue?— but the younger students needed more. For them, it meant grabbing one of the bins of crayons and taking them outside.

The first time I taught the lesson happened to be a beautiful autumn day, just a hint of wind and only a few fleecy clouds dotting the otherwise pristine clarity of the mid-morning sky. I had the students dig through the crayons to find all the possible blues and, holding each crayon up to the sky, see if they could find a match for the azure brilliance above. What they discovered was that there was no single crayon that could do the job; they needed one for the pale haze on the horizon, another for the deep blue straight above them, and at least one more for the sky between. Even within that understanding, there was variation, some saw the sky as veering into violet and some as more teal. Some thought the color was vibrant, others dull. I expected that there would be at least a few who would insist, as my high-schoolers had done with the apple in the dark, that the sky must be perfectly "blue," but lacking the facility to easily decode the words on the crayons, none were limited by that simple schema. When I taught it to the older elementary students, they had to be persuaded to look past the label, but having done so, also were able to see more blues in the sky than their prior understanding allowed.

My students were so successful on that lesson that I began to think of other ways to get them to look at the world more completely than the routine of preschool and elementary had fostered. I took them outside again with sheets of white paper so that they could see that

the sun was not yellow, but white and that it was no bigger than a quarter when the paper was an arm's length away. I was not worried about what each student saw, or even if it translated directly into their artistic production, so long as every student truly looked. If they were going to use the yellow corner sun with its ubiquitous rays, they were going to knowingly choose to do so. It seemed to work. My kindergartners and first-graders all thought it was amazing; so much magic that the sun seemed yellow in the corner of their eyes but white through the paper. My third- and fourth-graders painted unexpectedly sophisticated landscapes in watercolor. My second-graders, however, were surprisingly resistant and the most resistant of all was a girl named Teagan.

To Teagan, every idea I exposed them to was wrong. The sky couldn't be Cornflower, Cadet, or Cerulean; it was Sky Blue, and only that one blue, throughout. The sun was yellow, massive, ringed by yellow rays and lived either in the corner of a page or else nestled between two hummocky hills. It was not enough that she could continue to draw how she wished, other students had to keep drawing that way as well. She was especially upset that Emory, Haley, and Savannah— her best friends— all seemed ready to leave corner-suns behind. Her reticence and resistance became outright intransigence when, having already lost the simplicity of the sun and the sky, I took away lines. All I was attempting to do was create an experience that would lay the foundation for an understanding that lines, particularly contour lines and outlines, are a necessary fiction. They do not exist in the world, but on the page, and— among other purposes— mark the separation between areas of contrasting color, texture, and value and between objects. Lines, as I emphatically told the class, do not exist.

"Lines!" Shouted Teagan, pounding on the table, "do too exist!"

My claim that lines did not exist came at the end of class after a demonstration with the students seated in a circle around a beach ball on a stool. When lit by the usual buzzing, flickering neon lights, the ball was evenly lit. There was so much ambient light, when combined with the sunlight from the bank of windows, that the ball appeared as it would in a simple schema, flat-colored and perfectly round. When I lowered the blinds and pulled the blackout curtains across the windows, the ball gained some dimensionality, brightly light from above, shadowed below, and with an array of partial shadows radiating out across the seat of the stool. Turning on a studio lamp and turning off the overhead lights altered the experience of the ball again. Not only did the dimensionality of the ball increase, becoming a full form with a brilliant highlight, impenetrable shade, and all the values in-between, but each student was treated to a different view of the sphere. When I asked them to describe what they would draw, none said they would draw a circle or a ball. Some saw the ball as "almost round" a mostly-complete gravid gibbous whose lower edge disappeared into shadow. Others saw only a crescent. Several noticed that it was like the moon. This was important enough that I could have left it there; some future teacher would introduce them to *sfumato* and *chiaroscuro* and they would be primed to understand it.

I wanted my reward, however. I wanted to see understanding light their eyes.

I sermonized, as I am sometimes wont to do at the end of lessons, that we could squint our eyes and see only the lights and darks and could draw our ball simply by shading from dark to light. We could, I told them, see how the pale yellow of the incandescent bulb changed the color of the pale purple sphere or how the shadows were charged with a deep

indigo and paint how the color changed across the surface. We could combine all that we saw of color and value and create an image replete with every value, every hue, every variation in intensity that we could see. It would be as real as a photograph, or more real because a camera does not see the same as our eyes. We could do this, I passionately disclaimed, without ever once having to draw or paint a single line. There were no lines around the crescent of light, the pool of shadow, or around the ball itself.

"And do you know why?" I asked, my face beaming as I worked up to the crescendo, "Because lines are only an illusion. They are a trick that we use to help others see what we see, to tell one part from another. But lines" I said, punctuating each word, "Do. Not. Exist."

It would have made for a good conclusion. Their teacher, Ms. O'Brian, was waiting for them just outside the door. I could have lined them up and sent them away, their heads swimming with concepts they did not yet fully understand. I might have avoided any conflict if their class had fallen at any other time of the day, but it was time for lunch and there was no one waiting in the hallway for specials to begin. With Ms. O'Brian there, I could have invited her in as I asked the students to stand up and push in their chairs. Before I could tell them to stand, however, Teagan shot from her seat and pounded both fists upon the table, shouting her defiance. I looked to Ms. O'Brian, who shrugged and turned back to Teagan.

"Alright," I said, trying to not be condescending, "where do you see lines?"

"Well… Everywhere," Teagan said, "There's lines 'round everything. The window, the table, the door, everything."

"Those are all shadows," I patiently explained, "what you see as lines, what you'd draw on the page as lines, is just the difference between light and shadow, between the window

and the world outside, or between the door and the wall. Even our hands, when you look at your palm you see wrinkles. If you wanted to draw all those wrinkles you'd probably draw them as lines, but really they're thin little shadows."

"What about on the road? Those are lines. White lines and yellow lines."

"We might call them lines, but those are all shapes. They're just rectangles, one after the other."

"What about—" Teagan began, waving her right hand in a snake like motion.

"Still shapes, even if it goes on for miles it's just a very long and very skinny shape."

"That doesn't make sense!"

"Well," said Ms. O'Brian, finally coming to my rescue, "It will have to make sense later. We need to get to lunch and off to recess."

Teagan allowed herself to be steered into line, but her face remained clouded, her scowl nearly a pout. Teagan was apparently upset all through lunch and became increasingly distraught during recess when her trio of friends told her that everything she saw as lines— the branches of trees, the cracks in the pavement, the monkey-bars, and the wire of the chain-link fence— were all shapes and shadows. At the end of the day, Ms. O'Brian sent Teagan back to my room. Her eyes were bloodshot and her eyelids red and swollen, tears trickled down her cheeks.

"Ms. O'Brian sent me to 'pologize for yelling at you," she said in a soft voice, then even quieter, continued, "I'm sorry."

"It's okay," I said, "you were upset."

"It's just not fair," Teagan said staring resolutely at her shoes, "Savannah's a better

drawer than everybody and even Haley and Emory are smarter than me. I just don't get it."

"Don't worry about it," I said, preaching for the second time that day, "It's okay not to get it. We all see the world a little differently. I've had high-schoolers who don't get it. I just want you to know about it so that you *can* get it when you're ready. You'll be okay. You'll be okay."

Teagan sniffled and nodded slowly. I looked up to see Ms. O'Brian at the door. She ushered Teagan out with an arm around her shoulder and escorted her back down the hall. As they walked away, Ms. O'Brian leaned in and spoke to Teagan in low, soothing tones. When all the parents had come and the bus had departed, Ms. O'Brian came by a third time and told me what had happened during lunch and at recess. I told her about my lesson and that I was simply laying a foundation for their later learning, that I did not want to be *that* art teacher who is blamed by their later art teachers for leaving things out that should have been taught or else teaching convenient falsehoods that later had to be untaught. I suggested that half of her class who said they understood probably did not, and probably would not, for at least a few years. Teagan was the only one I've ever had who reacted like she did.

"Well," said Ms. O'Brian, "that's just Teagan for you."

Things quickly reverted to the usual routine. Teagan's tears were long-since dry when she next had art and we soon moved on to more enjoyable things: paint, clay, and papier-mâché. Winter came and left with the incumbent greeting cards and snowy vistas made of construction paper with glittery snow. We practiced layering color, and wax-resist, and learned to how to paint wet-into-wet with watercolors. We decorated paper and took up origami, and because it was a beautiful Spring, used our origami skills to make paper airplanes

that we could all fly from the soccer field. And soon enough specials were all done for the year and we were out back having a picnic lunch with parents, teachers, and students to celebrate the end of another year. I remember seeing Teagan there, staring off into space with a faint scowl as Haley, Emory, and Savannah raced to finish their watermelon slices before running off onto the field. I was off to the side of the playground, keeping my eye on a group of preschoolers who were playing in the sandbox, and I turned to give them my full attention when a ululating cry caused me to turn back.

"Mr. B! Mr. B! Mr. B! Mr. B! Mr. B!" shouted Teagan as she ran towards me, each step punctuated with an exclamation, "Mr. B!"

Teagan barreled into me and wrapped my legs in a fierce hug before jumping back. "Mr. B!" she cried, "I get it! I get it! I get it!"

"What do you get?" I asked.

"That thing about lines. That they don't exist. I *get* it!"

I smiled at her, honestly bewildered, and said something along the lines of "good job" and "I'm proud of you."

As Teagan ran back across the playground, Ms. O'Brian sidled up to me and put her hand on my shoulder. "Well," she said, without a hint of irony, "that's Teagan for you."

As a teacher-educator, I would relate that experience to my classes of future teachers as "that time I made a second-grader cry." I have used it as a cautionary tale of how our teaching, and in particular our insistence on promoting certain ways of seeing or being in the world, can undermine our students' experience of reality. At the same time, however, I have also used it to illustrate the potential transformative power of teaching

when we provide students with meaningful experiences and allow them the intellectual, emotional, and pedagogical space to use those experiences to increase their own understanding. I have no doubt that some of my students, hearing that I made a little girl cry, simply nod their heads already certain in their knowledge that I am simply a bad teacher. I recognize that there is a myriad of interpretations and readings that are possible, but I will privilege several conclusions that I have drawn from the experience, both in the lived immediacy of the event and in my subsequent use of it to help inform teacher candidates' practice.

First, students' perception is constrained by the schemata we make available to them; if we only provide students with local color, they will be able to see but not perceive the interactions of light and shade that complicate it. Second, more complex schemata do not overwrite but are incorporated alongside and in-addition-to any simple schema and that all remain available as tools for understanding or communicating perceived reality. Third, we cannot blithely tell students that a simple schema is "wrong" and more complex schemata are "right," merely that different schemata serve different purposes. To do otherwise is to insist that a student's experience of reality, constrained within their conception of the world, is itself "wrong." This is a psychological trauma, and no matter that Teagan recovered and even profited from the experience, it is still an unforgivable harm to have inflicted upon a student.

I must live with the knowledge that I could have handled that class differently, that I made a second-grader cry, placing her in a situation where she was othered for her phenomenality and by her closest friends. To one way of reading both the lesson and my

narrative of that day, nothing I engaged students with would qualify as criticality; I had, therefore, not only harmed Teagan but done so for no discernable reason. If we take a broader view of criticality, that by exposing students to the disjunctions between what they perceive as real and what they sense in the world, they will be primed to interrogate the disconnections between normal and natural that operate in much the same way. This take on criticality is similar to what bell hooks described as the "discernment" required for all critical thinking, "a way of approaching ideas that aims to understand core, underlying truths, not simply that superficial truth that may be most obviously visible" (2010, p. 9). They would be impelled by their natural curiosity and compressed by the experience offered in the lesson to reject a prior rational interpretation of their experience that would now intuitively and non-rationally seem suspect. If Audre Lorde is correct that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" then it is not merely that the power and technology of oppression cannot more than briefly achieve antioppressive ends, but with a broad view of criticality, that the schemata that allow the experience of reality to remain unquestioned cannot be reterritorialized around a more complex intentionality. Without directly calling existing schemata into question, therefore, students cannot be critically aware of themselves or the role of their mind in constituting and construing the real.

While I still maintain that fostering criticality is a valid pedagogical purpose for "creatively destroying" how students exist in the world, I would also conclude that we cannot do so in any way that makes our students question their sanity, that positions them against their peers, or that fails to provide adequate support for developing other

understandings. To some of my students that day, concluding the lesson with the evocative, “Lines. Do Not. Exist,” seemed to act as punctuation, putting a voice to something that they were ready to voice themselves. Teagan’s reaction made me wonder how many were in the nebulous territory between the dawning understanding that I sought and her paroxysm of dissent. I wonder whether being so powerfully assertive and so terribly certain shows that I was uncritically living out the central problem of the “masculinist discourses of liberatory pedagogy” (Lather, 1995, p.178), replacing one monolithic set of understandings with another.

One possibility to avoid that false certainty would be to design a more caring intervention that allowed students to work collectively, directly combatting the destructive individualism of the original lesson. This could take the form of collective memory work (Haug, 1999), readying students for a disruptive experience by having them actively remember, reflect upon, and discuss a situation where they realized something. Alternately, the memory work could follow the bulk of the lesson and, in anticipation of my chosen denouement, ask them to reflexively address their still-current experience. In either case, I strongly suspect that the production of memories in written or verbal form would be more important to realizing the collective experience of the group than analyzing any textual production for the elements of language it uses. Additionally, I worry that leaning too heavily into reconstruction would not allow the teacher to remain an organic intellectual, but would establish the same sense of indisputable authority that led to Teagan’s outburst. Especially for students who have not yet mastered the particularities of grammar, the formal deconstruction and reconstruction of the text may

need to be replaced by a more holistic approach to the product of their collective process. Rather than directly delving into the idea of nonunitary subjectivity with second-graders, the goal of such work might be to have students become aware of their awareness and nudge them into accepting the possibility that their perception is not absolute. As Kumashiro stated:

> "Any assembly of voices indirectly tells an underlying story, one that will always exceed what the individual voices say explicitly. And the story then frames how we make sense of what it is we are learning, and how it is our learnings relate to what we already know and who we think we are" (2002, p. 58).

By having students engage with each other in telling stories about the limitations of their perception, we can both establish the intrinsic variability of qualia expecting that each student will author a slightly different world into being. Comparably, by attending to the "similarity and dissimilarity" that we manifest by reading through and across stories, we might "pull the group together, arouse curiosity and create agreement" (Haug, 1999, p. 5). The key is that the production of understanding, the process of coming to understand, is more important than being exposed to the knowledge that proves the inadequacy of any specific schema. Disruptive knowledge, as Kumashiro wrote, "is not and end in itself, but a means towards always shifting the goal of learning more" (2002, p. 43). Ultimately, I think that Teagan cried because I became too fixated on the end-in-itself and not the criticality that I had sought to foster in the first place.

This is only my take on it, however; I wonder what you might have inferred from this experience. I also wonder what would have happened had Teagan not been impelled be experience, compressed by a lesson, and compelled by her friends. What must be present or absent to make it possible for students to take up authoring their own experience?

Disruptive Authority

When I first began teaching there were a few things I thought were desperately wrong with art education. As a gifted student, I had long been sensitive to the myth of the individual genius (Gude, 1999, p. 79), that a person's talent was innate and that teachers could do little more than cultivate it or allow it to naturally develop. Although I am sure that many teachers would resist this characterization, this concept of talent has allowed teachers to abrogate their responsibility to teach. I noticed this as a student struggling with my own deficiencies regarding color; despite my talent, I was so profoundly lacking in experience that I took color theory at face value and turned my grandfather into a Band-Aid.

I will not claim that my high school art teacher, Miss Sims, ever carried any ill-intent; on the contrary, I found her to be a capable instructor who demonstrated more care and acceptance than most of my other teachers had. At the same time, however, Miss Sims grounded her teaching in a set of dangerous assumptions. She first assumed that everyone had had similar cultural experiences, including museum visits and international travel. It simply did not occur to her that any student attending the mostly-White, very wealthy school would have only interfaced with cultural products through books or the Scholastic Art® magazine. She assumed that talent also equaled access, that her most gifted students had all

had private lessons and access to better materials at home— she neither understood that the cost of tutors, media, and tools might be prohibitive nor recognized the effect that limited access could have on the development of artistic skill. She also believed in an ill-defined concept of "artistic license" as purposeful rule-breaking and that talented students possessed an extra something that allowed them to know what rules to break and when. This permitted student who had a flawed understanding, or no understanding, to break the rules with impunity. If in the course of doing so they produced something æsthetically pleasing, their successes were the result of their obvious talent and not a consequence of their privilege mitigated by their lack of knowledge.

I knew that my own lack of experience with painting was a hindrance for which my knowledge could not compensate. My first forays into the medium were clumsy at best, but not for a lack of desire. As an eighth-grader, I had spent the accumulated savings from my all-too-rare allowance on art supplies: ten sheets of acrylic-primed 9x12" canvas bound like a sketchbook, a pair of gessoed Masonite panels and a single round #6 Taklon brush. I had also gathered all the paint I could scrounge up from my sisters' various craft projects. I wanted to use my father's old art supplies but his brushes were all well-worn and most of his paint had livered in their tubes, becoming solid masses of foul-smelling color. With little other choice, I relied on a few tiny bottles of craft paint and tried to make them last. I would venture that, barring all else, trying to learn how to paint with ancient, tatty brushes while using as little paint as possible is at best counter-productive. It meant that I learned some bad habits out of necessity. It also meant that I was unprepared for the reality of painting with better brushes and heavier-bodied acrylics on stretched canvas, and completely unequipped to paint with

oils. I remember staring with disbelief as Miss Sims complained about only having student-grade acrylic tubes and synthetic brushes, secure in her knowledge that we all had quality supplies at home, had seen large-scale paintings in person, and had been taught to do so much more with so much more. I resolved that I would not make those mistakes as a teacher.

I would, as it happens, make completely different mistakes.

I made my first mistake when trying to teach color theory as theory disconnected from practice. Doing so, I may have avoided the assumption that students had prior experience, but by not providing the opportunity to experience color theory, I presumed my students would have the freedom to explore paint and color on their own. I taught them all the essential vocabulary, made sure that when I called out, "red-yellow-blue," they would respond with, "primary colors!" I remember noticing, and being perturbed by, the difficulty they seemed to have with the idea that "red-yellow-blue" also defined a triadic color scheme. I was also concerned that, although they could shout out the answers, they did not seem to be able to translate that knowledge to their artwork. I decided to interrogate my own practice by designing a quiz for them and gave it to them the next day. The quiz only compounded my concern, however.

The first few questions were simply call-and-response in written form, fill-in-the-blank identification questions. I realized as I was writing the quiz that the directionality of the questions was important. "Which three hues make up the Primary Colors?" is semantically distinct from "Red-Yellow-Blue are:_____." The first only allows one answer within a single color system, the second allows at least two that are germane to the quiz, and an unlimited number of answers that are not. I also realized how shallow those questions were,

so the next several questions outlined scenarios such as "Suzy is making a project with a split-complementary color scheme. She has already used red-orange and red-violet hues. What hue should she use to complete her chosen color scheme?[91]" Below that, I directed them to look at the board where I had projected an image of a partially-completed project that used several values of violet and blue-green. This last, more complex scenario read, "Johnny had intended to use a triadic color scheme on his project, but he made a mistake. Analyze his work-in-progress and answer the following questions: What was Johnny's mistake? How do you think he made this mistake? How might he finish his project and still get a good grade on it without starting over?"

My students were miffed to have to take a quiz in the first place. Several of them gave up when they got to the second set of questions. More quit when they got to the last open-ended prompt. There was a fair amount of muttering on the lines of "this is bullshit," "unfair," "art's supposed to be easy," and the ubiquitous, "never taught us this crap." When I sat down to grade the quizzes, I found myself sharing in my students' mumbled sentiments. This was bullshit. All my students had answered the first five low-level knowledge-based questions, but about one-third of my students got all or nearly all of them wrong. Most of my students attempted the second set of questions, but only about one-third of them wrote correct answers. When it came to the last prompt, only half the class even attempted more than a cursory answer. Of those, fewer than half could identify the error. Of the remainder, only half again provided reasonable answers to the final question.

[91] Green.

From my entire class, only four students seemed to have enough understanding that they could work largely independently. The rest alternately annoyed me and made me angry. Had I not taught them this crap already? How could they know so little, and care so little about what they didn't know after I had gone out of my way to teach them what Miss Sims would have assumed they'd known for years? When I eventually calmed down, I got to thinking about my own experiences: beginning with my forays into layering color with crayon and colored pencil, my halting efforts to mix color without wasting a drop, and even painting that damn Band-Aid.

I remembered how shocked I was to learn that that colors were not as simple as I believed, and amazed that it took me so long to realize it. I envied the students who had had all the opportunities to visit museums and see paintings in person, who could afford the after-school programs and the private lessons, who agreed with Miss Sims that student-grade was not-good-enough. To a certain extent, I also pitied them. Their experiences primed them to exercise their artistic license, but most chose not to. I figured that I could provide my own students with experiences that highlighted the weaknesses of colors theory as it is taught, and encourage them to take up a more directly lived understanding.

This meant, first, that I would not repeat the convenient oversimplifications[92] about color that I had encountered as a student. Rather than simply tell my students that red and yellow make orange, for example, I guided them in mixing the hues in order to test out their assumptions, beginning with orange. They first discovered that it took very little red to make

[92] Flagrant lies.

yellow-orange or, alternately, a surprisingly large amount of yellow for any given amount of red. Many of them also realized that, no matter how carefully they mixed red and yellow, they could not produce an orange that was as vivid as the orange that came from the bottle. I used these realizations to introduce the ideas of color strength[93] and intensity. With this new understanding, I had them attempt to mix violet from blue and red, knowing that there was no proportion of red-to-blue or blue-to-red that would not result in a vaguely purple, desultory brown sludge. I had them practice making tints and shades with blue and yellow to prove, in the first instance, where the theory held up and, in the second instance, where it failed spectacularly. The blues would range from the most delicate robin's egg blue to the deepest indigo while the yellows seemed to jump from white to yellow to what my students called "baby diarrhea green." After acknowledging that we had to know and use the red-yellow-blue system as it was then required by the curriculum, I introduced them to the cyan-magenta-yellow system and using a bottle of magenta and cyan I had hoarded, demonstrated mixing violet from 2 parts magenta and 1 part cyan. I used that violet, in turn, to demonstrate creating shades of yellow that progressed from yellow, through a warm ochre, to a nearly-black golden brown. In the curricular parlance, yellow and violet were complements. To see if mixing complements to make shades held up under the red-yellow-blue color system, I asked

[93] A less-flagrant lie. It's not the strength of the color but the colorant, along with pigment loading and opacity, that determines the relative proportion of colors in a mix. Rather than pretending it was true, however, I taught my students that it was a "useful fiction."

them to try mixing shades of yellow by adding violet as well as the two other complementary pairs: red and green, and blue and orange. While it seemed to work for yellow and violet, my students could only mix rather middling browns for the other two pairs. Their lived experience once again complicated the curricular truth.

Yellow and violet worked, not because they were complements[94] but because violet contains cyan and magenta and mixing them completes the triad. Yet I was not overly concerned that my students learn how to shade blue without relying on the bottle of black[95], or of understanding the cyan-magenta-yellow color system, or the myriad intricacies of professional-grade paint. I knew that I could provide them with the neither the quantity nor quality of paints to make much impact. I could, however, subvert the requirement that I teach the red-yellow-blue color system by exposing students to its flaws and limitations and supporting students who were interested in developing a more robust understanding of color. While teaching my disruptive painting exercises, I also realized that I had to teach the fundamental skills, not simply about color and color mixing, but about painting. I appreciated that none of my students were born with an understanding of how to dispense paint, hold a paint brush, paint, take care of their in-progress work, or clean up and maintain their tools. Someone had to have taught them, or in many cases, not bothered to teach them, leaving them to learn whatever they could on their own.

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[94] In the cyan-magenta-yellow color system, the compliment of yellow is indigo.

[95] Completing the triad by mixing blue, a secondary color, with the tertiary colors lime and rose.

By the end of my first year, I had completely integrated the once-missing instruction into the practice exercises I had begun the year before out of necessity. I recognized that my students could not imagine the answer as part of a theoretical structure, they needed the lived experience of having encountered the problem, probably multiple times, and having noticed what worked and what did not. My students learned and demonstrated how to hold, load, and clean their brushes. They learned how to cut in and purposefully control the pressure they applied on the brush. They learned how to reliably mix colors and to avoid dull purples and baby diarrhea green. When I saw the power of experiential, embodied learning, I redesigned the subsequent projects to open up the same sorts of possibility.

I wanted my students to understand more than just color mixing and theory, but to come to know the effects that different painting techniques could have on their artistic production. In place of the painting assignment that I had inherited as a first-year teacher—one that fixated on the content of the painting— I required students demonstrate mastery by mixing colors from a limited palette. At the same time, they had to demonstrate a minimum of two painting techniques but could attempt any or all of the techniques that we had reviewed. I pushed students to explore more elaborate ways of organizing their composition to feature the techniques while allowing them to also work from a place of personal comfort. To make this a viable classroom practice, I also had to change how I assessed them. In addition to the informal, formative assessments that often seem like they are intrinsic to visual arts pedagogy, I had them self-assess after the initial exercises so that they could plan their projects to favor their abilities, peer-assess after the second day of painting to contextualize their experience with their classmates, self-assess at the end of the project using

a rubric and in the form of an essay outlining their understanding of the requirements as well as their painting's strengths and weaknesses, and summatively assess their peers in a whole-class critique.

I found that their initial exercises could become, in the morally fraught language of accountability and standards, "an aligned pre-assessment." I realized that I could tweak my objectives from the ubiquitous "Students will be able to…" (SWBAT) to "Students will demonstrate their level of mastery by…" This addressed several inequities I had noticed in grading that, for example, students would be punished for producing a flawed product even if they had also proven they were "able to" make something better. Because I authored an objective tied to each student's level of mastery, rather than any arbitrary if well-intentioned standard, it also allowed me to honor that my students had vastly different amounts of prior experience and access to cultural materials as well as different purposes for taking visual art and different goals for their projects— what Ellsworth called "situated response-ability" (1996, p. 142). By creating formative experiences, employing a bevy of assessments, a menu of choices, and individualizing grades to reflect each students' growth and performance I found that I could center my teaching around the needs of students and the processes of art-making.

I was not siphoning off my own authority or reducing the role of teacher, however. Instead, I leveraged my authority as a teacher to combat the falsely-moral rectitude of universal, singularly-manifest "high expectations" and subverted the curriculum from one that promoted only a single way of seeing and being-in-the-world to one that allowed students the pedagogical space to use their personal authority and author

their lived experience. Instead of providing ready-made answers or ask that they receive my wisdom as their own, I sought to base my teaching around problem-posing "acts of cognition, not transferals of information" (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 79). While I was never certain that my efforts were truly liberatory, I knew that I could engage them in real, and productive, debate about æsthetics that moved them well past "visual thinking skills" (cf. Moeller, Cutler, Fiedler, and Weier, 2013) or "critical response" (cf. PCAE, 2006; WAM, 2007)— pedagogies that positioned students as consumers of art— and into ways of taking up art-historical and contemporary exemplars as part of their growth as productive artists. No longer would I teach them that "Picasso invented Cubism" as our infrequently updated textbooks claimed; rather I would allow them access to scholarly works that credited the reserved Georges Braque instead of the flamboyant Pablo Picasso, others that told a story of four years of close collaboration, and still others that disputed the importance of Analytical Cubism entirely.

My students sometimes questioned my motives, realizing that my classroom was not just an artroom or a studio, but had become a very different space than what they were used to.

"You're not going to tell me what to do?" A boy named Khalid once asked me several days into his project.

"Nope," I said, smiling benevolently.

"You're crazy, Mr. B."

"You're right," I said, "full-goose bozo. Now, are you still planning on trying out

scumbling[96]? Where do you think it will have the best effect?"

For a moment, he just looked at me, a slight grimace showing his continued disbelief. When my smile did not break and I did not move away, he rolled his eyes and slightly shook his head. Even as he did, though, his rolling eyes moved to his half-finished painting.

"Well," he said, "I was thinking I could try it here. Or, no, not there," he continued, stabbing with his brush for emphasis, "*here.*"

Although I was teaching reflectively in my first year and more reflexively into my second, my pedagogical choices were only loosely connected to theory. It would not be until I had the chance to pursue a Master's degree that I would reflect on my reflectivity and reflexivity and notice that the nature of my objectives and the design of my pedagogical space supported the development of autonomy (Vansteenkiste, et. al, 2004). By embracing an equitable approach to teaching and assessing and seeing the act of learning as *praxis* (Freire, 1970/2000), I was also leveraging my students' psycho-social development to establish the "motivation to practice the relevant skills and a desire to persevere through difficulties" that are "[…] shaped by social experiences and are inherently intertwined with individual feelings about the value and relative priority of the goal" (Crone & Dahl, 2012, p. 636). By positioning myself as both an agent of the system, and thus an unwilling participant in oppression, and against the established Order

[96] A painting technique similar to dry-brushing where you jab and twist with a partially-loaded stiff-bristle brush in order to create texture.

and the normalized Truth I allowed students to see the work that we did as a way of pushing back.

It was not about providing students with something that had been missing or overlooked, however. According to Kumashiro, "antioppressive education is not something that happens when the curriculum is no longer partial. Rather it happens when critical questions[…] are being asked of a partial curriculum" (2002, p. 67). The "self-transcendent purpose" of reaching for lived-complexity despite a curriculum that promoted a singular, flawed way of being became key to establishing the value and priority of the otherwise esoteric uses of visual art techniques. By tying my students' learning to both the immediacy of their experience in the world and an antioppressive stance that allowed them to disrupt authority, they were able to maintain their self-discipline "even when they [did] not know whether they themselves or someone else will benefit from their hard work in the long term" (Yeager, et al., 2014). Rather than governing students' acquisition of specific State-approved knowledge, which would have likely lead to the same difficulties overly-controlling parents experienced with recalcitrant adolescents "including externalizing and internalizing problems and noncompliance" (Van Petegem, et. al, 2015, p. 914) I sought to create a pedagogical space that allowed students to develop their own understandings of their work, each other, and the world. I had seen, however, that absent an adolescent drive for autonomy, such a pedagogical stance, when coupled with a teacher's need to be heard and understood, could make at least one second-grader cry. After it all, I suspected that there might yet be a unified theory of learning that had the capacity to instill autonomy in

students of all ages and support their ongoing authorship even as their shifting intentionality alters the territoriality of the possible. If it already existed, I would have to find it. If it did not yet exist, I would have to articulate it.

I owed Teagan nothing less.

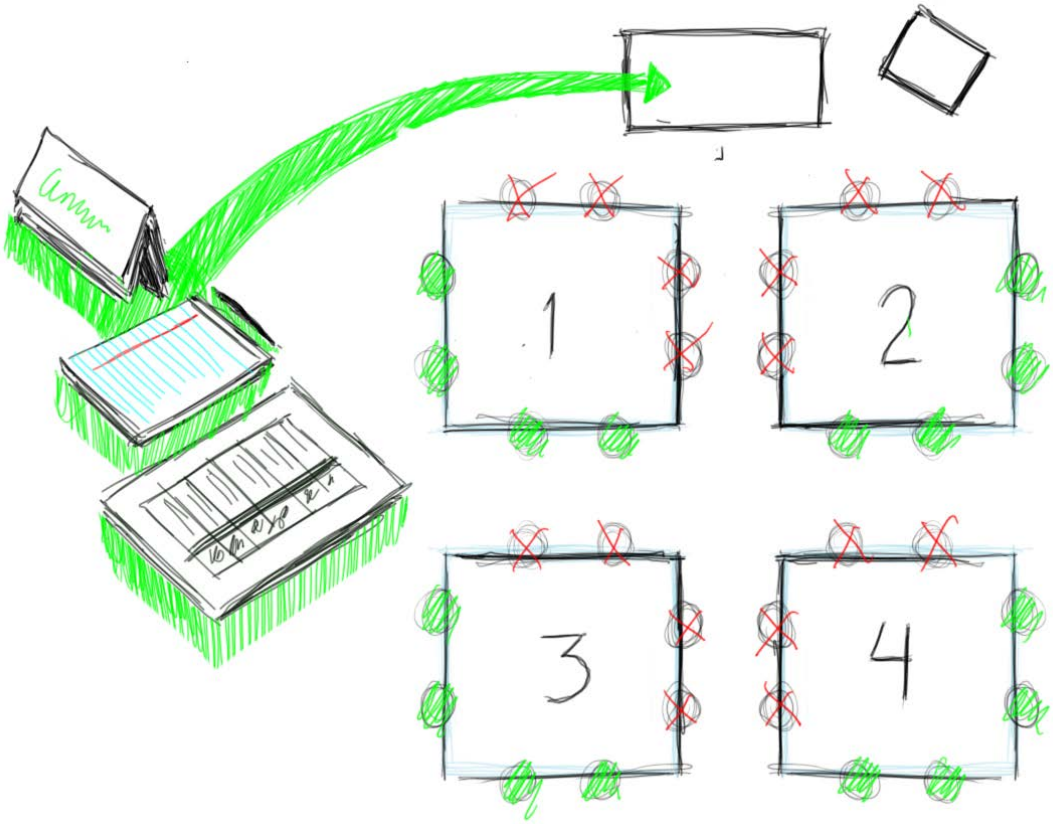

Figure 6. "Visual Literacy Experience," digital illustration, 2015.
This image indicates the actions students needed to take upon entering class and where they should sit. It is one of several pedagogical experiences designed to demonstrate both the possibility of using visual art as scaffolding and to cause them to intend to, and assess, their own literateness.

Chapter Five: Authoring Authority

It's late on a Tuesday, one of my rare "days off" where I don't have to be on campus to teach. I've not had any meetings or school visits scheduled, and yet I seem to have put in another 12-hour day. I know that, if I don't find a natural stopping point, I won't get enough sleep; I will just write and re-write the same section in my head until, exhausted, I fall comatose for a few hours. I think I know what must be said, but there is a part of me that resists putting words on the page. It is not because they are inauthentic or because I am afraid what may come, but because I must now take all the threads that I have pulled apart from my lived tapestry, weave them together and tie them off. I know that there can be no final reading, that each assay into the phenomenality I might call forth will bring about a different assemblage, be territorialized around the needs of the moment, and situated within the lived through-ness of the reader. Yet knowing this I still resist writing the words:

Let me tell you how the story ends.

I first became interested in the Neighborhood Bridges program after attending a Diversity Dialogue at the University of Minnesota on February 13, 2015. Neighborhood Bridges, as I would come to learn, is "a comprehensive program of storytelling and creative drama for elementary and middle schools intended to develop the critical and cultural literacy of children and to transform them into storytellers of their own lives" (Zipes, 2004, p. 44) that has served Minneapolis school children for the past two decades. I admit that I was quite taken with the idea of teaching artists intruding into the classroom space to disrupt the usual narratives. The idea that children would become the

"storytellers of their own lives" through an arts experience was compelling. It fit well with personal beliefs about teaching and seemed, if not the antidote to conformity, at least a balm for students who all too frequently were relegated to being the objects of another's story and not the subject of their own. Four hypothetical questions framed the dialogue:

1. What if we used the arts to engage meaningful, multimodal literacies?
2. What if students were encouraged to bring all of who they are into the classroom?
3. What if students were supported as producers, not solely consumers, of knowledge?
4. What if students contested and transformed oppressive storylines through imaginative retellings?

I sat, rapt, completely captured by the speakers' stories of positive change and "meaningful, multimodal literacies." As I listened to the rambling peroration of the teaching artists, however, it seemed like something was missing. For all that the speakers seemed to be talking about the arts, they did so without seeming to use anything other than theatre and storytelling; I had been used to having to make the distinction, "arts with the s," but here it seemed like they were only concerned with the "s" and only the one "s" at that. Where was dance? Where was poetry? Where were the visual arts?

I left the room both uplifted and quietly troubled.

I had no doubt that their anecdotes were true, that there were students who had difficulty in their general-education classroom but benefitted from their experience with the teaching artists, but I also wondered about the stories that they did not tell. Silence

cannot tell us anything, of course, but we can infer much from the shape of it. Where, in this conception of storytellers intruding in classroom space, was the teacher they were temporarily displacing? Were teaching artists complying with classroom-specific, school-wide, and district-level rules and policies that— in the everyday humdrum of school— were often misguided or discriminatory? When it came down to it, what were the goals of the program: were they, like Freire had done in Brazil, using literacy as liberation? Were they touting improved test scores as justification for the program? This is a dangerous proposition in the face of research that has disputed any causal inference between arts experience and academic performance (e.g., Vaughn & Winner, 2000; Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013). It is also dangerous when dehumanizing, antidialogic practices such as repetitive drill, routine practice tests, and emphasis on "bottom," "bubble," and "problem" students, produce measurable gains that can be causally inferred. I worried that, whatever effect the teaching artists had, it came from repetitive and formulaic writing practice disguised as antioppressive pedagogy rather than out of dialogue with and for the purposes of the students. Nonetheless, when I had the chance to experience Neighborhood Bridges within a course on critical literacy, I seized it.

The class offered at the University distilled this one-year experience into two intensive weeks, beginning with a grounding in creative storytelling (Zipes, 1995; 2004) and the thirty-one "functions" within fairytales (Propp, as cited in Rodari, 1996, pp. 45-46) and culminating in an opportunity to teach a single Neighborhood Bridges lesson to elementary students enrolled in a summer session. Having had some time to reflect on my experience with Neighborhood Bridges, what I remember most is being exhausted. I also

remember being nervous— but I was a veteran teacher, what did I have to be nervous about?

As it happened, a great deal.

I was assigned two stories from Greek mythology, Prometheus and the invention of fire and Pandora's box, and a co-teacher, Christina[97], who had just finished her first year teaching English at a private school. I knew going in that this could be tricky. Christina, like many first-year teachers, held somewhat conservative views on behavior with a focus on controlling students. She also espoused neoliberal ideals that I thought were both intellectually and morally suspect. When it came time to co-plan our lesson, Christina was simply not interested in spending time, in-class or out, in being creative. I, however, was.

As we learned, a typical Neighborhood Bridges lesson consists of four movements: the fantastic binominal, storytelling, creative theatre games and performance, and writing. We were to attempt our own lesson but, so we were told, we were unlikely to have enough time to have our students write. I was interested in taking the fantastic binominal— a writing exercise in which unrelated nouns linked by a preposition become the seed of a story such as "the elephant below the candy store" or, perhaps, "puss in boots"— and modifying it so that it became a drawing exercise. I was also curious what would happen if we purposefully created a discrepancy between our two stories and asked students to attend to what was missing instead of what was merely

[97] The names of individuals featured in this chapter have been changed.

present. We could, I thought, leave the rest of the movements as they were so that students would have a sense of consistency throughout the four days that we were with them. Christina, being generally uninterested and uncertain how a Neighborhood Bridges session should look, agreed.

We began to have some difficulty right away. Most of the teaching artists were not trained as teachers and actively avoided teacher behaviors while relying on the force of their personalities to compel student participation. I had long utilized both, leveraging the expectations students would have about being in a classroom space while also being forcefully, and sometimes ridiculously, opinionated, frequently ebullient, and always passionate. Christina, through no fault of her own, had neither grown into the teacher persona nor learned the pedagogical sleight-of-hand that allows experienced teachers to avoid having to manage behavior, enforce discipline, or control students' bodies. Our students' eyes followed me as I moved through the space and they listened, as attentively as rising fourth-graders might, to my introductory spiel. When Christina tried to introduce herself, however, she immediately lost the class's focus. I quickly stepped towards the chattering students, caught their eyes with mine, and, finger to lips, shushed them with the brief, plosive, "psh," I had learned from my high-school German teacher.

I could see the raised eyebrows of the teaching artists that were observing out the lesson, but I believed, as I would later reflect on the lesson, "that students need[ed] a safe space within which they [could] transgress and that it was important to establish the boundaries of that space." What happens within the space is just as important, however, as how we bring that space into being. We had the students physically embody their

understandings, moving to different points in the room and placing their bodies at different levels to indicate their familiarity with certain mythological characters and stories. It seemed to work brilliantly; students were not simply reciting their answers but were embodying their understandings. Rather than having to "check for understanding" in a more traditional way with raised hands and recited answers while hoping that the few called-upon students represented the class, we could see the whole class at once and quickly read what their needs might be.

After such a fantastic start, barring the unwelcome shush, all that we had to do was pass out blank notecards. We could then have students draw their vision of a Greek hero, god, or goddess on one card and, after being given a second card, a different character or an everyday object on the other. With the list of prepositions that were already in the room from the teaching artists that had taught the previous several days, we could have students tell their own story by inserting a preposition and take up each other's stories by shuffling the cards amongst them. This did not happen, however. We split the room and I gave my half of the students their single card. Christina, however, gave her students both cards and told them to draw gods and goddesses. She also told them, as I have seen far too many non-arts teachers do, they could draw whatever they wished and that it didn't matter if it was any good.

In those few seconds, she completely robbed the game of its educative potential and cheated visual art out of any importance as shared meaning or as work worth doing. I was very aware of being the more experienced teacher and of the usual assumptions about gender and power, however; I was not about to talk-over or correct my co-teacher.

We had discussed demonstrating the binominal in the usual fashion or imagining a discussion or argument between characters, but neither was possible when students had little direction and were assured that there were no expectations at all. As it sometimes does even in visual art classrooms, this moment of "free expression" limited students to exploring only their immediate desire to draw the familiar (typically Zeus and Persephone) and denied them the opportunity to author their own creative re-imaginings. Several students had to be cajoled into drawing more than a stick-figure. One student, a Latino boy named Maximo who had been spent much of the last several days being pulled out of the classroom for bad behavior and refusing to work when he was in the classroom, drew nothing at all until I repeatedly encouraged him.

As much as it bothered me to see what I thought was an important opportunity so quickly derailed, I cannot pretend that our students were aware of any lack. They seemed quite comfortable drawing upon memory and imagination and were impelled by the typical need to share and have their drawings understood. Thus, as we transitioned into the storytelling phase of the lesson, we still had students' interest and investment in what-was-to-come. I told my story first. If anything, I was overly prepared. I had elected not to use the version of *Prometheus* we had been provided but returned to Hesiod to adapt my own. Because I knew Christina would be telling *Pandora's Box*, I thought it would be clever to make my story male-centric and Christina's female-centric and see if students noticed the gendered nature of our storying. I incorporated questions, foot stomping, and asked students to take up what Prometheus looked like as the protector of mankind, or how he must have felt at the moment as he stole fire from Zeus's hearth.

I had not expected my telling to be greeted with stunned silence, or for them to be unwilling to take apart the story at all. I knew that I had slipped a few things in, that Prometheus was a transgressive teacher teaching forbidden knowledge for example, but I had at least expected that they might tackle the morality of theft when the thieving serves a greater good. I'm not sure whether it was partially the presence of their regular teacher in the room, the other teaching artists who were arrayed in the back taking notes, the professor from the University, my over-the-top performance, my own presence as a teacher, my Whiteness, my maleness, or a combination of any or all of those, but our students did not want to engage in anything but the shallowest questions. Being unfamiliar with the story, they could not tell who was missing or how the story had already been subverted and, when they had the chance, avoided any question of morality, loyalty, obedience, or sacrifice.

I was entirely flummoxed at how it worked out.

When they took up an improvisatory activity called the chair game, things moved even further from the expectations I had for them. Those who had to retell versions of the story, or moments of it, as they had already heard it did so easily. The third group, however, struggled. They were to take up a new story that began, "There's an evil boss of a giant fireworks factory who wanted all his workers to do exactly what he wanted, and

he worked them to death[98]. Bob was the factory manager who loved his workers so he…" and the first to add to it was a girl named Taylor.

"–found a kitten," said Taylor, "and he brought it home. And it was all fuzzy. And it liked to eat…"

"Pizza!" shouted Chris, who was not next in line.

"Pizza," concurred Montel, who was. "And there was a ninja…" he continued.

When Taylor abandoned the important details— there was neither a boss, nor fireworks, nor a factory in her telling— she deprived the potential of the story of any coherence. Every addition seemed to take the story further away from the situation, each student starting with but then quickly abandoning the line they had been fed. Although I respected the choice to repurpose the story— and it certainly was not a prompt that allowed for complete improvisation as the problem was only too evident— but their complete rejection of the potential of the story entirely mystified me. I had imagined that, after several days of storytelling and playing the chair game, that they might have started to intrinsically understand the rules of improvisatory theatre. Without the stated need to build on the story they were given in "yes, and" fashion, the students fell neither into theatrical practice nor into the storytelling "functions" we were tacitly exposing them to. We had, to put it in the context of my prior experience, tried to teach them to paint without bothering to make sure they knew how to hold the brush.

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[98] I had originally intended this prompt to be an evil teacher who worked her students to death, but I was told that might be a bit too transgressive.

Had we been their usual teacher or returning as a teaching artist, we could have acted reflexively and remedied that lack. My part of the lesson was over, however; it was Christina's turn to lead the class. Although I had shared my ideas with her in advance, I knew very little of what she intended and neither saw nor heard her version of *Pandora's Box* until she shared it with the class. She knew that I had included moments of student engagement in my story, but she had nothing planned beyond asking the students what might be inside the box. I don't think she realized the importance of bringing students into the story until she saw what doing so could accomplish. Even though she had not planned to do so, or practiced, Christina tried to keep the same actions that I had used for Prometheus and Zeus. The students could sense her hesitancy, I think, as only a few of them stomped their feet and flexed their muscles. She had not built space for student action into the story, and had nothing for Hera, Athena or Epimetheus. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Christina's story-telling was strongest when she told it as she was comfortable. She drew the students in with her single planned question and allowed them to frame the broader construct of good and evil. At the same time, however, her questions left out concepts of beauty, matters of gender, or what power gold and jewels had that could make Epimetheus ignore Pandora's pleas. As a result, the students were never shown the connective tissue between the stories, without experiencing any compression, and were not driven to express any connections to their own.

Without that guidance, the rehearsals and performance that followed fell into chaos. As I had originally intended with the binominal drawings, I wanted groups to play with each other's stories and enter each other's experience through dialogue. Like they

did with the chair game, they mostly ignored the directions Christina and I gave them and used the time as an opportunity to satisfy themselves. This isn't to say that it was a waste, I don't think they'd had either the time or the deep reflection to begin to own or transform the stories. There's also the problem of myth being a more academic thing; myths, Greek gods and goddesses, are curricular where fairy tales and folk tales are not. It may be that it is easier to see how to transgress with a counter-tale than simply with part two. It may also be that it is easier to transform the little-known than the well-known. No matter the reason, I felt that the rehearsals were not productive and that the performances were simply a more public rehearsal.

By the end of the performances, I was feeling completely drained and a bit disenchanted. But there was a last beautiful moment that restored something of my belief in the power of transformative teaching. The usual end to a session was with a chant of affirmation. Maximo, who had caused problems for the other teaching artists all week, and generally never wanted to participate, wanted to help with the chant. The trust he had in Christina and me— he didn't know the chant at all, really, but wanted to help— was endearing. By pushing him to draw and making him a part of our stories, instead of setting him apart in yet another "time out," he knew that we would not let him flounder. Then Taylor, who had so successfully sabotaged the chair game, came up to help him out. She held his hand as they, the two students who were the unruliest of an unruly bunch, led the class in perfect unison.

For me, this course was instrumental in continuing to shape my thinking on critical pedagogy. I found the readings from Rodari and Zipes to be profoundly

informative and to show that criticality cannot be divorced from creativity; too often what gets couched as construction and deconstruction is thought of in purely rational terms. Additionally, I very much appreciated the theatre component. Most educational theory would have it that learning is something that only happens in the mind. Not only did the theatre games point to ways that we could have students embody their understandings, but the storytelling and acting opportunities allowed them to learn with their bodies and through their experiences. The tricky thing, of course, was time.

I would have liked to have more time to read, to write, to explore techniques. As it is, the course completely took over my life for two weeks— plus a little padding before and after— but there is something to be said about the power of ideas that they can compel you to put off sleep and still get up early. Our students, who were already experiencing the compressed time of the summer session, also had to take up myths after having been exposed to storytelling and theatre practices for only a few days; in the actual program, they would have taken up myth only after sixteen weeks of practice. I believe that we put forth a credible effort, that we challenged ourselves to be in the moment in ways that are sometimes difficult. And if we did a job that was more than credible, I'll not shy from it. But what we were doing is so much more important than approbation or applause that I'm not worried at all about how we really did.

My only concern is that the experience was meaningful to the students.

On reflection, threats to student authorship may spring from well-intentioned teaching just as much as from ill-planned or poorly executed lessons; while I think that Christina's lack of planning and her view that visual arts expression did not matter

undermined the potential of the lesson, I cannot pretend that my dissatisfaction sprang from that alone. In trying so hard to provide a transformative experience, and pushing them towards the epiphanies I was so sure they would have, we failed to leave them enough pedagogical space to take the stories up on their own. I wonder if I simply overawed them or if they felt that we were destabilizing their view of the world like Teagan once had before them.

I also wonder if there wasn't a creeping eurocentrism, not merely in our teaching of Greek myth, but in the curriculum itself. Zipes maintained that "the best storytellers are thieves and forgers. They steal their tales from everywhere—books, television, films, radio, the Internet, and even other living human beings" (2004, p. 24), yet there is little in the curriculum to suggest that this is the case. Although Zipes states that "it is advisable to introduce a legend or a myth that may come from their culture, especially if the school and the students may be developing units about multiculturalism" he also maintains that the chosen stories have wide appeal, regardless of origin, and that "they are intended to provide students with an understanding of 'canonical' texts in Western culture while demonstrating the diversity and richness of stories throughout the world" (p. 115). I question that formulation and even the perception of its necessity; can it be that the only reason to include a panoply of cultural referents is when we have students who force us to be inclusive? Does this inclusion only occur when they are present? Can we not question how the 'canon' came to be canonical, trouble whose stories can be told, and disrupt the wisdom and the folly that would seek to teach us how to singularly be? I am certain that, to create a better world, we first must be able to imagine ourselves in it. I think it is just

as vital, however, that we can see ourselves in each other; doing so requires owning our shared humanity.

I feel that this alludes to an important distinction.

Much of the work around critical literacy, and critical pedagogy writ large concerns the identification of structures of power and the deconstruction of discourses. In this paradigm, each of these entities exists separate from and outside the influence of our students but constrain, exert pressure, and bear influence *on* our students. I believe that this is a false dichotomy in both manifestation and directionality, however; our students are not discrete from their social structure but are always already implicated in the ongoing production of society. According to Kumashiro, structuralism "implies that oppression has the same general effect on people" but that "because all individuals have multiple identities, members of the same group will have different experiences with oppression. Structural explanations cannot account for this diversity and particularity" (2002, p.47).

To disrupt this structural conception of oppression, it becomes necessary to point to the ways that the students themselves are the authors of their own oppression and to provide ways to redirect that authorship. It is natural, I suppose, that many if not most will not take up the authority that doing so requires. It is also probable that it is such a leap from the usual ways of knowing and being that such profound transformational change simply cannot happen in a day. As I take up my own intentionality by authoring my experience and embracing— and disrupting— my authority, I keep coming back to the metaphor of seeds being planted. If teaching is the planting of seeds, we cannot

always be there to see the learning we have fostered take shape and we cannot expect that our students will be grateful when it happens. Instead, it is in those moments where the quiet speak and the attention-seekers defer where we can see the very change that anti-oppressive teaching makes possible successfully take root.

It is also experiences like this, where we might come to know the shortcomings of our efforts that we can begin to realize Schön's long-unanswered, but not unheeded, call for "reflection-in-action." For me, this means trying to move past being a "reflective practitioner" to becoming something else that I have come to think of as "becoming disruptive." At best, this is a fraught process, albeit a hugely rewarding one. There is no certain procedure to follow and no destination to arrive at, as if we could suddenly be made whole, the teacher we were always meant to be. It is not *being* disruptive, but always *becoming*. And these are dangerous thoughts to be had on too-little sleep and too-much-coffee, but it is not yet eight in the morning on Wednesday and I have to teach.

I have just come from my office— where I have casually flipped all the lights on— to my classroom— where the lights will remain off until I am ready to open the door and let my students enter. Where does this ownership come from? My office— the office— is a shared space and property of the University. Is it merely a state of dibs, of shotgun, of first-come-first-served? And how is it that the collection of people who will enter in a little more than an hour are mine? Am I the surrogate father of an extended and diverse brood? Is the classroom nothing more than another home? Am I parent, teacher, instructor, professor? Is there a difference to be had?

I perch upon the stool and lean against the podium, the little screen of my iPad gleaming in the classroom twilight. I navigate through the virtual space, opening Safari and calling up the Moodle kiosk. A few taps of my finger and I have entered the forum for this week, where sixteen of my twenty students have left their responses. Originally, I had planned to have them 'jigsaw' a set of six articles, each expressing a different perspective on the role of the arts in school. In the past I have seen a wide set of reactions, seemingly reflecting the diversity of opinions that students had before reading the articles and showing only very shallow engagement with the writing itself.

These sixteen— now seventeen— responses seem to be different. They are less shallow, more nuanced, but still possess the immediacy of held opinion and lived experience. But something else has changed: each one seems to substantially agree with the author they read. Is this classic and unyielding sophomorism: wholeheartedly believing the very last thing you read? Is this a byproduct of my efforts to get them to engage texts more meaningfully? Is this a performance of identity that they, not privy to the differing point of view expressed by the authors they did not read, see manifest in the writing? Do they see me not as a teacher or instructor but as a professor— literally one who professes a point of view as if it is cogent fact— and believe that my selection of their article is proximal to my own views of arts integration?

I am aware that I see my students as both adults and children: when good they are my 'kids,' when they have left me tired and frustrated they are my 'little angels,' only when they are released at the end of the semester are they fully, and irrevocably,

themselves. But there is this space where they are still mine. What would happen if I asked them to take up a position that they had not espoused?

Jigsaw be damned.

In place of the recommended activity that, I am now certain, is more about coverage than grasp, I need something else. What the students seem to have down, all eighteen that have submitted their responses is to learn *of* and *about* arts integration in public schools. There is neither space nor time, yet, for them to learn *with* the arts, though they are drawing ever closer to the realization of that possibility. Is there a way that I can have them learn *through* the material? And is that the sole voice of authority? What of opinion— of the æsthetic as it is sensual, hedonic, and viscerally lived? What of experience? Can I discount the centrality of each student's long apprenticeship of observation, un-teach the lessons that living has taught of life, or ask them to bracket the narrative of their own story? Can I, instead, draw attention to it and bridle that authority, not to limit it but to allow them to steer and control the conception of self to further their understanding?

I write four propositions on the board in a halting drifting hand. The first states that the arts should be fully integrating across the content areas and be taught as standalone subjects. The second, that arts should only be taught by arts teachers. The third, that it could be integrated but does not merit its own class. The fourth, that the arts should not be taught in schools at all. I lower the projector screen to hide this piece of the reformulated lesson that is percolating away in the back of my mind. Can I do this? No, clearly, I can. Should I?

It makes me a little uneasy. Recently my sister told me that her school in North Carolina is approaching the autumnal ritual of 'picture day.' In the past several years, it seems that fewer and fewer teachers are showing up to have their picture taken. The yearbook is increasingly barren, photos replaced by boxes with the ubiquitous gray fill and the words 'not available.' To try and get a happy public face on an institution that sometimes seems more like a prison than a school, the principal announced a plan: teachers could bring a prop that represented themselves as a teacher or referenced something important in their lives. If they did, they'd get a package of pictures for free and the yearbook would have more smiles and fewer placeholders.

This immediately bothered me.

I cannot imagine that the school would object to a teacher bringing a Bible or a cross. But what if a Hindu brought, not a lotus, but a swastika? Could a Buddhist bring their Buddha? Could a neo-pagan bring an athamé? And what of Whiteness, maleness, middle-class-ness? If it's okay to 'race for the cure' what about to 'save the ta-tas?' What about professing that black lives matter or that all the immigrants should just go home? And if the school allows for the often hidden or subsumed human identities of their teachers to become visible, what happens at the end of the year when yearbooks go home and the parents bombard the school with demands that so-and-so should be fired? What does it say about the nature of identity that we can ask someone to perform theirs within the confines of what is normal, acceptable, and safe?

Am I asking my students to perform an identity, or their identity, in such a reductionist way? Can I frame what I intend in such a way that they become aware of the

performance itself, that the roles I wish them to take up I only wish them to wear like a coat? Does it compromise the sources of their authority to pull another's opinion about them in that manner? Will they be able to shed the role when they are done or will dwelling in and thinking through a different mindset shape identity?

The students come in. Class begins. It is a somber beginning. I explain my purpose and point out the startling ubiquity of their agreement with what they had read. I tell the story of my sister's school and ask them what they think of the idea of symbols as an inducement to have pictures taken. The reaction shocks me. I am wrapped up in concepts of how what we show speaks to who we think ourselves to be. My students, though, wonder what it says about the school, and us as a people, that we are so willing to reduce the complexity of our very selves to a single symbol of something we like or something we do. Is that the entirety of what we want students and parents to see, that Mrs. Science Teacher is a football fan, Mr. Spanish Teacher likes the Walking Dead, or worse that Ms. Social Studies teacher is nothing but a Social Studies teacher?

I explain my own sensitivity to identity and try and make them aware of how the reality of their selves and the nature of their choices establish who they are to other eyes. I want them to know that teaching is not a neutral activity, but deeply embedded in and reacting to the world. I want them to have real authority, to become conscious of their authority and take up authorship be being deliberate in their choices. I, therefore, encourage the passionate among my students to come and take up one of the four propositions. Those who are not passionate adherents to one way of thinking can play

another role. The naturally contrary— or lacking that, the very brave— can pick up the mantle of the antagonist.

Only two of my students are brave. The ardent believers are split between proposition one and two, the malleable scattered among them and settling for proposition three. I give them time to figure out who they must be or become, to take up their chosen proposition. I ask them to focus on a set of questions that I hope will bring them fully into their chosen roles. What would it cost to enact their proposition? What would it benefit? How would it work and what would it look like? Can they imagine what the outcomes might be? To give them this space, I cannot be the professor and stand at the podium, but can I diminish my role in this without diminution? It is not merely being the 'guide on the side' rather than the 'sage on the stage;' instead, if I am to allow them the authority to work through this I must encourage their full authorship. All I can do is establish the framework, create the pedagogical space, in which they can try out different ways of thinking and being.

When they've had time enough, we establish the rules of debate and proceed, round-robin: point, counterpoint, rebuttal, and response. My students perform admirably. There are times when they use their authority to disrupt the process of the debate, but it seems so wonderfully generative that I refrain from exercising my own authority. They take up the propositions as if they were theirs from the outset. There are no milquetoast performances among them. But is what they are doing a performance? Is it only the passionate that are true to themselves and the brave that are true to the task? Can it be that the written word is the performance and the debate a glimpse into the self? Does this

relate to the sources of their authority? Is it that opinion and experience are authentic? Or is it possible that taking on another's words and work as your own is itself an act of making or performing the self? Does it require a choice or are we shaped by chance as much as by the interactions with each other? Is there an 'I' that is apart from the world or is the only I that we can know a product of being a part of the world as we experience it?

I would love to take it up with them, to try and pry out ever little secret, but it is eleven now, and I have to let them go. As I stow away the sign-in sheet and their name tents, I begin to think about how it connects to my own experience. My thoughts return to Ursula K. Le Guin as I step out into the still-wintry Spring morning. In a certain respect, I was merely making an assignment that would improve the quality of their counterarguments in the traditional final paper; they could not argue against something without an understanding of how those arguments might be framed. At the same time, however, I suspect there is something else involved in perspective-taking. In taking on a role, they came to know something of the "true name" of those who would live out that role. They also came to know something of themselves as they were intending the connections and disconnections within the comfortable multiplicity of the territorialized assemblage of self and the discomfort they felt as they interiorized aspects of the exterior milieu they would rather leave exterior.

I wait in line for lunch, and I wonder about the different responses I have seen through the years to disruptive teaching. I could tick off the stories I have told on my fingers, and a dozen or more besides. There was the first-grade teacher that forbade me to write in cursive because it made the other students want to as well, the world-history

teacher that decided I needed summer school, and the summer school world-history teacher who realized I did not. Being told to print or made to waste a few weeks of Summer was hardly dire, but I remember a single moment in sixth grade, staring down a PE teacher who assumed I would fake an asthma attack to get out of running another mile, and truly realizing for the first time that I could die because she thought I was lazy and a liar. It did not end when I became a teacher.

I am only half-way paying attention to the walk back to campus, my mind filled with images of former colleagues and students whose names and faces all blur together. I see the right-wing teachers who tell their students who to vote for, *how* to think, and what to believe— and doing so with impunity. At the same time, I see the teachers I am more likely to think of as friends—those who encourage activism, or ask *that* their students think, or to question and justify their beliefs— reprimanded, disciplined and dismissed. There was the teacher who told a student we shared that acing his make-up exam after missing the final was not enough to allow him to pass. It seemed he had not turned in a paper while he was hospitalized and had skipped doing a couple of worksheets to attend his father's funeral. Just because his father died, she said, didn't entitle him to any leniency. He was, after all, a thug. I know that some of my desire to disrupt authority stems from those experiences; how I would have loved to disrupt the authority of those who so often used it to such destructive ends. At the same time, I cannot help feeling that all they were accomplishing with their authority was the deferral and denial of their students' authorship. I do not believe that authorship could be prevented, however; all

deferring achieves is a postponement and all denial brings about is the turning inward of intentionality.

I wonder, then if authorship is something that must be earned, held, used, and owned. Is it possible that all those whose voices are not heard in a moment will eventually be heard, regardless of what we do? Perhaps the same could be said of authority, but it reminds me that I am leery of thinking of either as agency or empowerment. I think Dewey's concept of expression perhaps comes the closest, but it is important to note that neither authorship nor authority can be given or taken, temporarily allowed or permanently barred.

I enter my classroom, not truly knowing whether my whole thinking is nothing but a reaction to the pain I have witnessed and the tears I have caused, or if there is a purpose to teaching that seeks to disrupt. By embracing their authority and displacing my own, was I risking it all or just too much? Is this the crux of a post-critical pedagogy, not simply that we cannot provide answers but that we cannot presume an answer at all? Is this how we avoid using the master's tools? We speak from our own experience only as a way of allowing our students to speak from theirs; we provide them structure, but only so that they can assemble the implements of their own liberation? I suspect that the best we can ever provide for our students is not tied to canon, lauded as a standard, or written into curricula. I doubt that it is even connected to the need to destabilize, deconstruct, or disrupt canonical Truth as we seek a more hopeful, human, dialogic, antioppressive future for education. Instead, I think— beyond any knowledge, skill, or technique— that each teacher ought to provide students the pedagogical space, a meaningful chance, and

time enough to author themselves and intend to their lived-experience. If we and our students are always in flux, then we cannot pretend that they are teetering on the edge of realizing some hidden Truth and that we, clever teachers, can provide the push. We cannot know when, how, or even if the experience we create will produce the change we seek; instead, we must be able to console ourselves not with what we have done but with what we might have made possible.

As I think back to my reading of Dewey, I am reminded of my conviction that teachers should know the core of their own pedagogical creed, all those things that they believe but rarely author into being, and be attentive to how truly their own teaching holds to all that they profess. When I to look back at my first attempts at teaching grown men and women to bounce on a ramp, I have no doubt that my creed has changed. But I think this is as it should be. There may be pieces that remain, but the truth of authority, as I see it today, is that it only exists in the spaces between, a negotiation of our relationship to each other and the world. The truth of authorship is that the story cannot be concluded, only handed off. There is more to say, of course, but there will always be more and it will wait. It is noon, my next class is about to start, and I have to teach.

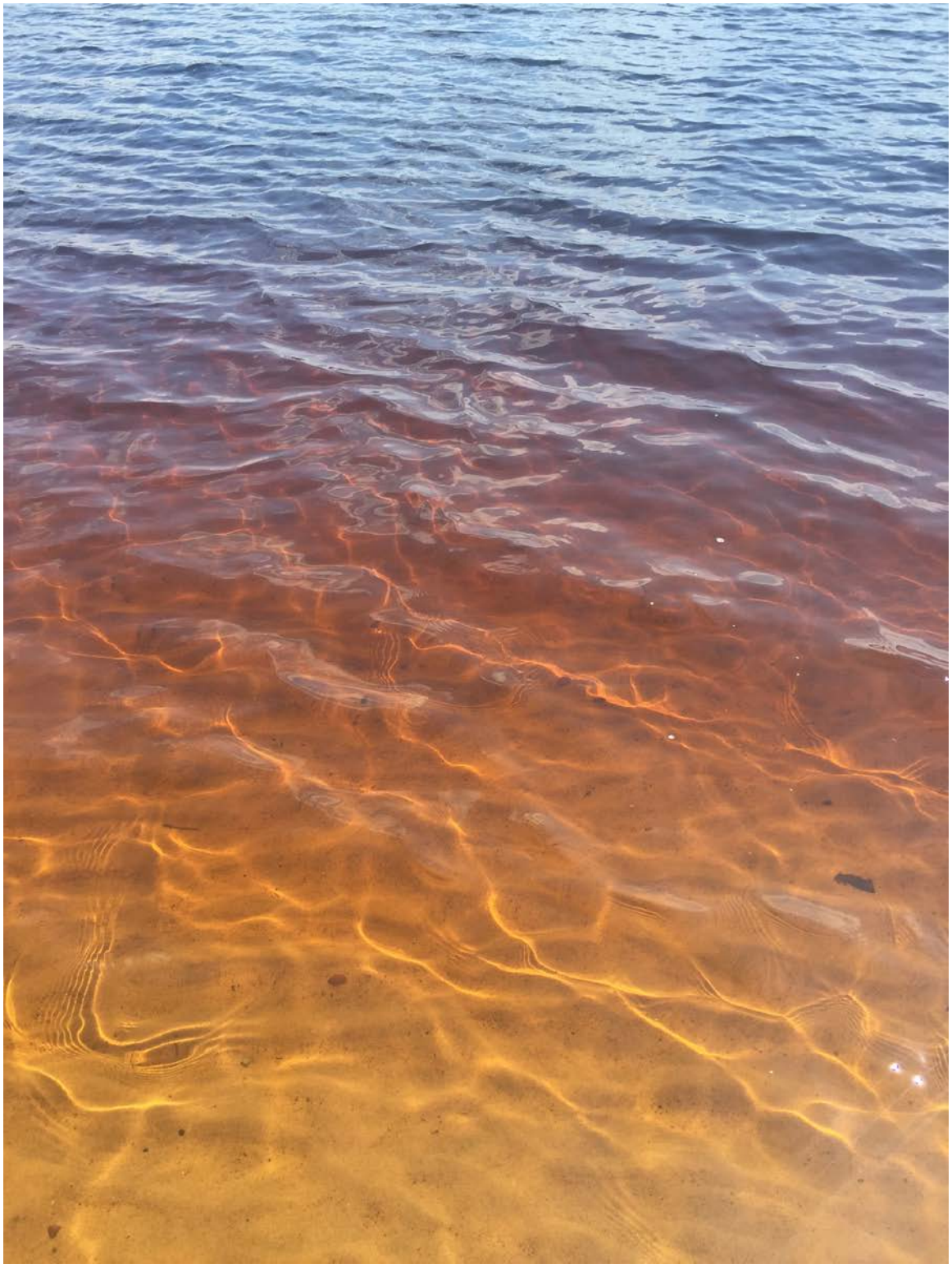

Figure 7. “The Waters of Lake St. Croix,” digital photograph, 2016.
This photograph represents an æsthetic response to the complex interactions of color and light, taken while collating and verifying the empirical materials of this study.

Chapter Six: Instigating Authorship

Positioning This Study

As I have conducted this study, I have been aware that the assemblages of authorship and authority I have offered up operate on theoretical and meta-theoretical levels. Post-reflexivity requires that we "[…] try to see what frames [our] seeing" (Vagle, 2014, p. 133) and continuously question everything including our own assumptions. By intending to the character of our intentionality we engage with our own recursivity, knowing that looking at what we usually look through requires a condition of lived through-ness from which we cannot fully extricate ourselves.

We are always already temporally too late, even in turning our intentionality to phenomena that are continuously manifest we cannot pass by ourselves. Phenomena might manifest to our focused intention at something approaching the instant of manifestation but, because we exist within and are pulled along with the stream of time, our reflexive gaze must always be cast upon what we believe *is* but actually *was*. Even when we confidently imagine manifestations that have yet to be realized, we assemble those tentative manifestations out of the stuff of our phenomenality as we have intended to it. We are also spatially localized to the whorls and arcs that map our passage through the world around us. Our understandings of distant phenomena can only ever be liminal and approximate, assembled from what we have immediately at hand. We cannot be except as we have been. We must, therefore, possess and utilize our own authority as we intend to the various manifestations of authority and how these manifestations have been disrupted in our experience and might yet come to be disrupted in the experience of

another. We must therefore simultaneously take up the authorship of our own phenomenality, including of authorship and authority, in order to understand how we experience authorship and what we experience when authorship is deferred or denied in the face of our own and outside authority.

As I have come to think of authority and authorship as both theoretical and meta-theoretical, I have also become convinced that authority and authorship are empirical phenomena; that its, because they explain how the assemblage of self might be territorialized and illustrate a method for intending to and realizing that assemblage, both authority and authorship act on and exist in the world. They cannot merely be epiphenomena, occurring only within-the-mind and in-response-to the external world; indeed, if authority and authorship were epiphenomenal we could create authority and instigate authorship by simply establishing the structures that control for both. Merely duplicating the apparent circumstances within which authority seems to manifest— such as standing in front of a classroom or on a dais with one hand raised— does not grant authority to the intended recipient. Simply placing pencil and paper into the hands of a student will not instill authorship. Nor does organizing the room into columns and rows, increasing the bunting and exaggerating the size of the crowd, or substituting whatever electronic device is currently fetishized for analog tools have any real effect without also addressing the affect of the complex social relations from which both become known. Instead, in order to be manifest as something that can be disrupted authority must always be socially as well as structurally mediated. In order to be deferred or denied— or, indeed, to be affirmed and immediate— authorship cannot simply be curtailed or

expanded by exposing students to certain discourses or implementing classroom structures but by attending to the impulses, impulsions, compulsions, and compressions that occur amongst them.

My answer to Ellsworth's question— why doesn't this feel empowering? — is that it cannot as long as the *this* of antioppressive pedagogies is a conspicuous and concerted focus on the "discourses of the pedagogy of empowerment [that] consistently position students as individuals with only the most abstract of relations to concrete contexts of struggle" (1989, p. 311). Being a disruptive authority and instigating authorship as an antioppressive pedagogy requires a turning away from ideas of empowerment that simultaneously mask and reify the apparent duality of structure and agency. We cannot assume that there is any unified experience of oppression— nor any single manifestation of raised consciousness, humanization, or liberation— without denying or deferring the authorship of those who find themselves marginalized by our certainty. We cannot address the question of why our efforts are not empowering without also asking: empowered by whom and for what ends? I believe that we cannot contend that individuals are empowered to either resist or reify the structural features of their current circumstances nor that they possess agency but may not agentically act upon the world, without also addressing those structural components.

This was perhaps the fundamental flaw in Lortie's *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (1975/2002). Lortie identified teachers as the primary impediments to pedagogical progress and social change, embracing conservatism through their presentism and individualism (pp. 209-212). If Lortie's conclusion is correct that teachers agentically

resist change, then the less teacher agency there is the more likely change becomes. Four decades of accountability, standards, and well-intentioned reforms have demonstrated the opposite, however; while individual "indicators of effectiveness" (p. 210) may have been complicated by sexism, racism, classism, ableism, common standards and shared measures of effectiveness have only entrenched the oppressiveness inherent in the system. The short-sightedness and short-term thinking that had allowed individual teachers to congratulate themselves on their small and isolated efforts while ignoring the pressing social concerns of education has now become part of the system. To confront isolation and create collegiality, teachers have increasingly been required to spend less time alone and more time engaged in collective training experiences, meetings and collaborative efforts such as co-planning, co-teaching, and co-assessing. Although I am personally disposed to think of such efforts as problematic sources of group-think, I will also acknowledge that collaboration can be antioppressive when it is allowed to naturally flourish among a community of educators and to serve the needs of students and the community.

When collaboration is enforced, either by directive or by perceived necessity, however, it also tends to enforce normativity, stifle innovation, foster resentment amongst teachers and spread malaise amongst students. Rather than meeting the needs of *each* student, well-intentioned enforced collaboration often directs teachers to meet the needs of *all* students— including those they do not teach— and to erase any distinctions between teachers, pedagogies, and classes. In my last public school teaching position, this was expressed as the expectation that any student should be able to move from one

teachers' classroom to another of the same level and subject and continue learning without pause. Pragmatically, this meant that teachers had to plan each moment, script each lesson, and ignore the expressed needs of their students in favor of covering material and keeping up. By defining the problem as the presentism and individualism of teachers, and ignoring the social and political reality of teaching, Lortie's research has predicted the conditions of modern educational reform: our former concern for equity has largely given way to equality, and equality to conformity.

From Lortie's contention that a lack of change in school is due to teacher intransigence stemming, in part, from their blind adherence to a faulty apprenticeship (1975/2002) to Archer's depiction of a morphogenetic society that to all appearances is stubbornly morphostatic[99] (2015), the assumed dualism of structure and agency has created a problem of presence. This is not a sense of presentism as in Lortie, but of temporal presence, what we might think of as present-ness, and the physical presence of that which manifests within our own phenomenality. As in Giddens's structuration theory (1984) in which the apparent duality of structure and agency collapses, I have tried to present authorship and authority throughout this study as co-constitutive and not as contradictory. I have nonetheless found Archer's analytical dualism to be a useful tool in contextualizing and situating narrative. Per Archer, past and future actions, as well as culturally and spatially distant events, are inherently structural. Only that which is both present and immediate is agentic. Every past moment was once present, however. Every

[99] And, in the current political climate, atavistic and regressive.

future moment will become so. Technology has largely erased the perception of distance and difference and, even where technology cannot create a semblance of immediacy, events that are the most distant and foreign to the researcher are still intimately known through the agency of those who live through them.

By taking up the phenomenality of past experience, the past becomes immediate and present; as a result, structure becomes subsumed within our remembered experience of self. Structure may precede agency, but the nature of phenomenality requires that we intend to the structural as it relates to the experience of phenomena and not as a self-constituting or independent entity. Therefore, although the manifestations of authority I have tentatively identified seem more innately structural than manifestations of authorship, both must be understood as partial, shifting. I must, therefore, be clear that authority is not power in the Foucaldian sense and the disruption of authority is not empowerment. Authorship is likewise not synonymous with agency. They are instead relational phenomena that manifest within and amongst social interactions where we are called upon to make sense of the world and are variously situated within and outside the structures, such as formal public education, where we expect such sense-making to occur.

As I have taken them up, authorship and authority are intrinsic to the ongoing formation and expression of identity. Because identity is not fixed, but an aspect of our continual becoming, it is also both multiple and partial. While identity cannot be fixed, the agentic act of becoming, of territorializing the assemblage of self, entails internalizing structure whether that structure is reified or disrupted. Agency is limited by what individuals believe the reification and disruption of interiorized externalities allows. I

have therefore conceptualized authorship as an act stemming from our need to understand and participate in causality that draws from the available empirical materials to re-cognize and realize the self. Analytical dualism would imply that authority is the antecedent of authorship just as structure is the antecedent of agency. Within that analytic, what we perceive as authorship in the immediacy of our personal experience becomes authority when viewed from a distance; likewise, what we perceive as the authority of others is authorial when more intimately experienced. Because intending to phenomenality eliminates the perception of distance authorship retains primacy over authority in this analysis.

I suspect that the study of authorship and the disruption of authority might act as a cipher to the irreducibility of structuration that denies agency and the necessitous precedence of structure within analytic dualism that limits agentic action to the present moment. For all teachers, a focus on the continually moving present within a more relational analytic may prove to be useful. I strongly believe that teachers must understand how students come to author their phenomenality and how their own authorship, perceived by their students as authority, shapes what students believe is permissible, what is possible, and how students might ultimately move between or transgress beyond those limits. For visual art teachers, however, the study of authorship and the disruption of authority takes on special meaning and particular importance.

The discipline of visual arts, as it is commonly taught, is rife with contradictions, fundamental mistakes in theory, dangerous ideas about the expression of talent and the development of skill, and a reliance on unquestioned tradition. As I have detailed in this

study, the red-yellow-blue color system is at odds with our experience of color and, while the cyan-magenta-yellow color system is no more complex or difficult to understand, red-yellow-blue nonetheless persists. We also teach a canon of human proportions that is not only woefully out of date, being fundamentally indistinguishable from the Vitruvian Canon drawn by Leonardo in the fifteenth century[100] but promulgates several problematic ideas. Among the more troublesome are the conflation of an imposed unrealistic ideal with what is normal or average, that the female body is derived from and defined by how it differs from the male form, that the body is proportionally constant across populations and over time, and that knowledge of the canon itself is a prerequisite for drawing from observation. Similarly, we often fail to question the received wisdom of Brunelleschi's linear perspective, instructing students in the strict application of principles that only create a reasonable facsimile of depth when the picture plane occupies a small portion of the field of vision. Having failed to question that, we also neglect the relationship between 1-, 2-, and 3-point perspective, teaching them as three separate systems rather than a single system organized around common principles. We then further ignore that linearity is an imposed mathematical order that belies the subtle curvature of our sighted experience.

This study leads me to conclude that there is an educative potential in continuing to teach flawed sets of ideas; by presenting students with a theory that is at odds with

[100] The Vitruvian Canon was, in turn, based on a passage from Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's *De Architectura* written circa 30-15 BCE.

their experience in the world we might create enough tension that they feel compressed and are driven to expression. I am leery of this for several reasons, however. First, because each of the theories outlined above reasonably approximates experience, students who do not actively intend to the world or who lack the desire or capacity to notice the difference, will never have the opportunity to utilize those hidden truths. When we combine this with the common understanding of artistic talent— that artists intuitively understand the appearance and action of the physical world in ways that non-artists cannot understand or be taught— we create a mechanism through which those with talent are experientially taught and those without are exposed to rules that complicate and may preclude reaching the understandings that experience affords. Because the classification of giftedness and talent is further complicated by matters of class, race, ethnicity, and gender we gear that mechanism to the benefit of cis-male White, English-speaking students of sufficient economic means.

Even if our teaching could not be implicated in furthering oppression, we nonetheless establish a pattern in which, in order to continue progressing within the discipline, students must unlearn what they had once been so patiently taught. Can we treat knowledge of the observable world as if it is a guild secret from the Arte dei Medici e Speziali of renaissance Florence and reserve it for only those few that would pursue a college-level arts education or pay for private tuition? What does it say about the arts as a discipline if we reserve the fundamental observable truth only for a few? Why, if we have known better for so long, has there been so little progress and so many problems upon the way? What effect does it have on the perceived importance of the arts if students'

learning in other subjects correctly contradicts their learning in the arts? Particularly in a fraught political environment filled with alternative facts, how can we present arts knowledge that we have long-known to be flawed or false as if it is, not merely an alternate set of facts, but the undisputed truth? As a result, I question the morality of continuing to teach as we have taught despite the potential instigation of authorship. There must be another way.

Disruptive Dispositions

One possibility is to look to the development of disruptiveness as a professional disposition. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2001) described dispositions as the professional attitudes, values, and beliefs that teachers demonstrate through both verbal and non-verbal interactions with parents, students, and colleagues. Dispositions have also been defined as "commitments and habits of thought and action […] visible in a teacher's decisions and actions over time and especially in the teacher's reflections about the consequences of those decisions and actions" (Murrell & Diez, 2010, pp. 14-15). While early surveys identify numerous personal and professional dispositions that might qualify as "essential attributes" of teaching (e.g., Katz & Raths, 1982), there is no universally acknowledged set of dispositions necessary for teaching. Of the more than 130 potential dispositions identified by Katz and Raths, NCATE (2001) required that a teacher candidate demonstrates only two: fairness and the belief that all students can learn. With the dissolution of NCATE and the formation of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), this requirement was eliminated from Standard 1 in favor of a more general requirement

that candidates "demonstrate an understanding of the 10 InTASC standards" (2015, p. 2) while recognizing the dispositions included in the InTASC standards as "a promising area of research" (p. 11). CAEP further requires that "educator preparation providers establish and monitor attributes and dispositions beyond academic ability that candidates must demonstrate at admissions and during the program" (CAEP, 2015, p. 9).

Although CAEP has framed this obligation within a positivist paradigm of reliability, validity, and "data that show how the academic and non-academic factors predict candidate performance in the program and effective teaching" (p. 9), this requirement allows teacher-education programs the *capability* to include disruptiveness along with any number of other dispositions that they deem vital to the success of teacher candidates and first-year teachers. Whether they would possess the political will to do so, or whether disruptiveness could cultivate critical thinking in ways that could eventually be shown to improve program completion and educational outcomes, is another issue. Before either of those concerns could be taken up, however, we would first need to determine if disruptiveness is dispositional and, if it is, what behaviors evince disruption.

Katz and Raths stressed that dispositions must be distinct from skills, attitudes, habits, and traits (1985, pp. 302-303). If disruptiveness is a skill that can be learned, an attitude that can be affected, a habit that is "neither intentional nor consequent to reflection" (p. 303), or an innate aspect of character, it cannot be dispositional. In the first case, although teacher candidates might be coached in how to successfully disrupt authority without, for example, making a second-grader cry, disruptiveness does not describe any general capability to disrupt, but the intentional, repeated use of that

capability for pedagogical purposes. Disruptiveness cannot, therefore, be a skill. Similarly, while cynicism, pragmatism, or other attitudes may predispose a teacher candidate to become disruptive, such stances need not be manifest as an action to be assigned to a person whereas disruptiveness requires disruption. As such, disruptiveness is not an attitude. Third, teachers must actively choose to be disruptive as a means of achieving preferred pedagogical and social ends. Over time, disruptiveness could gain some measure of automaticity but, because it remains intentional and reflexive, it cannot be habitual. Finally, we cannot characterize individuals as being born with a certain quality or quantity of disruptiveness; instead, disruptiveness is an observable tendency that is permanently embedded in context and that always occurs in reaction or relation to something. Disruptiveness also comports with Hampshire's (1953) eight overlapping criteria for statements about dispositions in that the description of disruptiveness "summarises what tends to happen or is liable on the whole happen," is a relatively stable and frequent tendency, and manifests in "actual incidents […] dispersed over some period of time" (pp. 5-6). In a more contemporary parlance, disruptiveness is also certainly other than the pedagogical skills and content knowledge that is routinely taught and assessed in teacher-education programs.

Disruptiveness is, therefore, a disposition.

Although there is no agreed-upon set of desired dispositions for teachers, they may be loosely clustered into issues of professionalism, innovation, social and emotional well-being, and developmental and intellectual support. This has allowed the assessment of the associated dispositions to affect binary relations— a teacher is either professional

or unprofessional, for example— or posit developmental progressions that assess either how completely the disposition is manifest or how well-practiced the associated behaviors appear to be (i.e., Murrell & Diez, 2010, pp. 195-199). If we were to take up disruptiveness as a disposition, we cannot assume that it would be in line with other "professional dispositions […] that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students" (CAEP, 2015, p. 6). Because it is descriptive and not explanatory, this study does not support any conclusion about the potential positive impacts of disruptiveness. Per Hampshire's assertion that "one does not commit oneself to conditional predictions of the form" (1953, p.8), this study also does not support any single form that disruptiveness must take or any set of behaviors that manifest it. Indeed, this study suggests much the opposite. That a teacher is disposed to disrupt does not necessitate that they will do so, that doing so will serve a humanizing or antioppressive purpose, or that doing so would produce positive educational impacts or have any impact at all. Disruptiveness, as it is tentatively manifest in this study, has been shown to have both positive and negative aspects and that, even when the expressed phenomenality supports a particular view, we must remain cognizant of the possibility that the same disposition would be interpreted differently within the unexpressed phenomenality of another. That my teachers often believed they were exhibiting behaviors that were reasonable moral, ethical, and appropriate does not change my lived assessment of the opposite. As Hampshire stated:

> "If it is true that any statement about character and disposition is a summary and interpretative statement of a tendency in human behaviour

> and calculation, it still does not follow that any such a statement entails any supposition about how the subject will, or would have, performed or calculated under certain conditions [...]" (1953, pp. 10-11).

This is particularly problematic if the purpose of professional dispositions is understood as raising student achievement instead of categorizing and describing teachers' tendencies to behave in particular ways.

The quandary of manifestation that Hampshire identified reflects the problems that critical pedagogy has had with agentic matters for decades; teachers may reify oppressive structures and continue demonstrating oppressive behaviors even after their consciousness has been raised if, for example, they perceive that their lives or livelihoods depend on it. They may also further oppression if they believe that an oppressive act or structure is not merely normal, and therefore expected or tolerated, by natural and inevitable. In this vein, disruptiveness could be manifest out of a desire to compress students into expression, but it could also manifest from a desire for students to conform to any preconceived notion of reality, morality, or normalcy whether oppressive, antioppressive, or both. Even within pedagogies that support predetermined outcomes, disruptiveness could as readily manifest in speaking against false constructions of reality and oppressive discourses as supporting them.

We may, therefore, see disruptiveness as manifest in either dialogic or antidialogic relations. When dialogic, disruptiveness is not merely about what is silenced or voiced, or in the terms of this study, what authorship is denied, deferred, allowed, or championed. Instead, disruptiveness requires intending to how disruption is continuously

marginalized by and yet reifies authority. Given the usually uneven power relations amongst teachers and students, dialogic disruptiveness may be most likely manifest as the teacher's denial of their personal authorship or pedagogical authority, particularly when both are proxies for dominant structures and discourses, in order to leave pedagogical space for students to author their own phenomenality. Students may likewise choose to disrupt in order to speak against oppression, to take up authorship, or to allow for the authorship of others. Both teachers and students may become disruptive to serve antidialogic or oppressive ends, disrupting others who they believe are outside or other than normal in order to maintain the myth that normal is natural. Students and teachers may also choose to disrupt their own authorship if there is no pedagogical space for them to safely do so or if doing so would require that they further other or marginalize themselves. Thus, even if we were to catalog the frequency of disruptive behaviors in the classroom as a potential professional disposition and determine which of those behaviors is more likely to support antioppressive efforts, we could not do so without also looking to the ways that teachers and students author their lived experiences.

Authorial Intensities

As I began working with and writing my way through the personal experiences I felt most strongly illustrated the possible manifestations of authorship, authority, and their disruptions, I began to speculate about the nature of authorship. If we were to assume that authorship had a fixed character and defined it with a degree of particularity that separated it from other forms of expression— for example, saying that authorship only occurs as expressions of self that address moments of connection or disconnection—

we could also assume a that it, like professionalism, has a binary character. If, however, we understand authorship as something that can be affirmed or denied, immediate or deferred we might also look at authorship as a more complex or fluid phenomenon that is a potential vehicle for creativity, criticality, and critical self-awareness. If authorship is complicated, contextual, situated, and fraught— as I rather suspect it is— then instigating authorship is not as simple as allowing students the time and space to write even we couch it in terms of free expression. Instead, our pedagogical choices might allow the possibility for authorship to take on a different character, or for students to take up authorship for various purposes including the disruption of authority and to experience what I have come to think of as authorial intensities.

Because of my desire to create a more socially-just system of education, I first thought of intensities as an indicator of the relative strength, transformative capacity, or antioppressive potential of authorship. This study would also support the idea that intensely authored narratives— such as those of resistance, struggle, resilience, and hope— both emerge from the vulnerability of the author and create an intimacy between author and reader and foster empathy. Authorial intensities would therefore also connect to the phenomenological concept of intending to; the more the author intends to their experience, and their experience of the experience, the more intense authorship becomes and the more likely is to take on dialogic, humanizing, and antioppressive aspects. If this is correct, we ought to be able to create a taxonomy of authorial intensities based on their properties.

My thinking on this is inspired by my childhood experiences with what my teachers routinely called Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher-Order Thinking Skills and what I eventually learned was given the far less enigmatic title of *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives Book 1: Cognitive Domain* (Bloom, Krathwohl, & Masia, 1956/1984). I thought I might be able to look through the *Taxonomy* for moments of authorship, repurposing it slightly for ends that were not purely cognitive. I also thought about being able to go back and un-revise the revision of Bloom's *Taxonomy* (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) to acknowledge that, while creation is more broadly applicable to education than the synthesis of the Hegelian dialectic, creation should not supplant evaluation— or critique as it most often appears in art rooms— as the highest-order cognitive skill. I also found myself searching out the companion to the more usually used taxonomy, the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Handbook II: Affective domain* (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1956).

I suspect that some of my dissatisfaction with Anderson and Krathwohl's *Revised Taxonomy* is that the authors have dispensed with the affective entirely, focusing instead on knowledge and cognitive processes in an attempt to create a product designed to aid the implementation of standards-based curricula. I quickly tired of seeing teachers claim to be supporting higher-order or critical thinking because they had their students create something when the making of it involved no transformation of knowledge, no gains in understanding, and had no personal stakes. I, therefore, saw the potential of connecting authorial intensities to the original cognitive and affective taxonomies; in particular, coming up with a taxonomy of authorial intensities could be important in having teachers

conceptualize what they're doing in the classroom when they believe that are asking students to "synthesize" and "evaluate" (Bloom, Krathwohl, & Masia, 1956/1984), to "organize," "conceptualize," and "internalize value" (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1956), and to "create" (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

In addition to expanding upon categories that are necessarily ill-defined, authorial intensities would allow for variations within categories. If authorship is situated within or alongside creating in Anderson and Krathwohl's revised taxonomy, for example, authorial intensities could be used to explain differences between creative acts such as construction, assemblage, bricolage, composition, improvisation, choreography, crafting, and making. Even in this non-exhaustive list, each method is distinct and carries with it affective, cognitive, and embodied significations that cannot be addressed by simply "putting elements together." Authorial intensities would also allow for creative and synthetic acts to be understood through such variously manifest forms of expression as situated, embodied, and simultaneously rational and non-rational.

Neither of the original taxonomies nor the Revised Taxonomy has questioned the nature of students' knowing, sought to understand where or how such knowledge is produced, or whose knowledge is valued. Instead, each taxonomy emerges from and exists within the normal social order and is positioned by the usual sorts of systems and structures. If authorship is not merely making in the sense established by the several taxonomies, but is a thing-itself, a phenomenon that manifests in the creation of the world around us and the development of the perceptions that influence how we take in and understand our being-in-the-world, then high-level moments of authorship would have to

go beyond critical thinking and address the personal ownership stake. Similar to the higher-order thinking skills I learned about as a child, a taxonomy of authorial intensities cannot be hierarchical; even if we perceive that we are going up levels as we "increase" in intensity from no authorship to full authorship and through every stage in between, we cannot conclude that full authorship exists without access to and working through the perceived lower orders of the taxonomy. To employ the cognitive framework in the revised taxonomy, we cannot engage in creation without being able to identify or describe. In the affective framework, we cannot internalize new values without being able to receive and respond to phenomena. Regardless of domain, higher-order thinking requires the capacity to access and work through lower-order thinking; therefore, higher intensity authorship requires access to and working through lower-intensity authorship.

Another possibility is to conceptualize authorial intensities in relation to the Deleuzoguattarian concepts of the plane of immanence and the body without organs. As someone becomes more intense, the become aware of their connection with and disconnection from each other and the world around them. A student might begin by learning about difference, making a body with organs, becoming a separate coherent self experiencing a pre-existing and post-existing universe, and having enough awareness to be able to describe their infinitesimal moment in space-time. As students take on other intensities, they may begin to question the coherence and apparent singularity of self and authorship. As certainty evaporates, they may wonder about differences between their phenomenality and the experience of others, noticing the tensions both between themselves and others and between what they see and what they perceive. They may

experience an intense longing for a true or authentic self. As they become more fully authorial, we might describe their authorship as emerging into a plane of immanence. They may directly address their understanding of the coherence, connectedness, interrelatedness of all things in the universe. Instead of looking for moments of difference or separation, fully intense authorship seeks moments of connection and interconnection.

One possibility is to develop pedagogies that connect authorial intensities to postmodern philosophy and post-structuralism. Students would be exposed to dominant and alternative discourses and the construction of normalcy. Rather than engaging in a direct process of deconstruction and reconstruction, students would be asked to intend to structuration. An emergent author embodies the contradiction of shaping and being shaped but has not resolved that contradiction. As students become more intense, they may begin purposefully authoring discourses but remain unaware of the tacit influences other discourses are having on them. In such situations, they would likely think that they are generating something new, novel, and unique. They may be obsessed with newness only to discover as they continue to develop and gain intensity that there is no such thing as the truly new or novel. At high levels of authorial intensity, students might begin to resolve those contradictions.

If this is correct that emergent and mid-level authorial intensity is only concerned with the new and the novel, or the personally particular, then this connects with the Western cultural model of creativity. It would also imply that lesser intensities would be based on principles of duplication, copying whereas mid-level intensities would be concerned, not with duplication, but with reproduction. This is perhaps a subtle

distinction but there is a difference between the two; the word reproduction implies going back and redoing the steps of creation albeit without all the steps of construction or generative confusion, but it becomes a more immersive experience than mere copying. Copying implies connecting without effort to prior moments of authorship or expression; while reproduction can approach the character of antecedent authorship if we believe that copying can duplicate the original authorial intensity we are mistaken. As students assume more intense authorship, the focus of their authorship will likely move towards transformation. As they do, they will also likely seek out opportunities to create independently, their focus on newness and novelty will recede or become attenuated with understandings of positionality, appropriation, and hybridity.

Because the higher level authorial intensities allow moving beyond reproduction and into creative or synectic transformation, it also shows a connection with the use of concrete, abstract, and metaphoric language or representation. Low-level authorial intensities would be expository, explanatory. This does not mean that such texts, performances, or depictions would perforce be less engaged, less powerful, or less important. It is possible for exposition to be poignant, for an explanation to include thundering denunciations or passionate applause, but much of the transformative potential would reside in its audience rather than arising from the nature of authorship. Mid-level intensities would be narrative— itself a continuum running from descriptive to persuasive. At this intensity, authorship would require more directly engaging with the audience, although students may still see a lingering separation between the two. High-level authorial intensities would include non-narrative forms of persuasive writing,

poetics, and philosophy. In this apparent continuum, authorial intensities rely on access to but carry no requirement of form. Poetics, for example, allow access to metaphorical or even metaphysical ways of being and seeing, but that poetry can be interconnected that doesn't mean that poetry as a form requires it. Students could choose to reject that potential and produce poetry that is expository in nature and has little connection to metaphor. Similarly, it should be possible for an author to purposely select and fully intend to an expository form of expression; relying on functions other than the level of description or the degree of abstraction to create a more complex assemblage than the form alone would seem to allow.

As I write through the complexities that are introduced as artistic choice and license interfere with the orderly classification and stratification of taxonomic categories, I am drawn to another Deleuzoguattarian idea: the rhizome. If we consider authorial intensities in terms of the number of connections or the complexity of relations among ideas we encounter something like the neural network of the brain. If this is accurate, we may presume that the more connections someone can make, and the faster and more meaningful those connections are, the greater their apparent authorial intensity. If we further complicate this, as Deleuze and Guattari did, with other ideas like territory, assemblage, and plateaus, we encounter the possibility that it is not merely the quantity of relations but their situated quality that informs our understanding. If we examine the idea of interconnectedness in terms of lines of flight— initially unexpected but meaningful diversions from established ways of thinking— then the rhizomatic connections, no matter how numerous, would be more or less expected. Because the ideas that authorship

would explore exist within already available discourses in already cognizable relations, following lines of flight would require taking these disparate facets and putting them in conversation with each other often in playful or experimental ways. The more frequently someone can do so, the more lines of flight they allow, the more fully they could claim to have achieved high authorial intensity. Rhizome is not a tree that can be traced or understood mechanically or topographically but only understood in essence as an abstraction that nonetheless governs real-world relations. Students cannot simply and pragmatically number their lines of flight or potentially divergent thoughts because that alone does not provide enough or accurate enough information; some lines of flight may be meaningless or not very fruitful, or may be fanciful and playful but in other terms less productive. We would need to augment our understanding of the proliferation of lines of flight or of the territory that rhizome allows us to encompass as well as other attributes allowable within the metaphor such as distance, speed, strength. We could further ascribe visual attributes to lines of flight such as weight, color, and vibrancy. If we complicate rhizomes with lines of flight and complicate lines of flight to make them multidimensional, then attaining high intensity not simply about having more, but in a certain sense, having better relations. Even as we look to increase in dimensionality, we must recognize the limitations of both “more” and “better” as a problematic construction. A student might feel an impulsion that pushes and pulls them in a great many directions; where those paths are not highly divergent from their emergent discourse/understanding, unproductive, unfruitful, or not fully grounded in the lower levels of authorial intensity we could not claim that they were experiencing highly-intense authorship. Similarly, it

Table 2
Interleaved aspects of authorial intensities

Authorial Intensity	Bloom's Cognitive	Bloom's Affective	Deleuzoguattarian	Post-Pedagogies	Creativity	Representation
Low	Synthesis	Organize	Noticing Difference	Unresolved Contradiction	Copying	Expository
Middle		Conceptualize	Questioning Coherence	Tacit Influence Newness	Re-production Re-cognition	Narrative
High	Evaluation	Internalize Value	Assemblage	Resolving Contradiction	Transformation	Metaphoric

might be a possibility for a student to trace one particularly powerful or poignant line of flight that nonetheless allows them to enter a state of authorial intensity that is more intense— and therefore more intentional— than someone who is exploring multiple lines of flight. As I look back upon the interleaved multiplicity of my thinking around authorial intensities, I feel it necessary to lean on Deleuze and Guattari one final time to answer my own speculation: what I have described cannot be a taxonomy. It is, instead, an assemblage. It cannot be understood a metaphor or as separate categories; instead, the various manifestations of authorial intensity exist on a plane of consistency, and as Deleuze and Guattari remind us, "the plane of consistency is the abolition of all metaphor; all that consists is Real" (1987, p. 69).

Ultimately, visual art teachers and teacher education programs must intend to teacher candidates lived experiences in order to establish the benefits of doing so with their own students. Teacher education must encourage teacher candidates to become critical about their use of authority and the complex relationships between manifestations of authority and authorship. One method of doing so would be to ask teacher candidates to author their own phenomenality, not as an avenue to achieving a sense of finality or of defining what an antioppressive classroom invariantly is, but what the purposeful disruption of authority and the instigation of authorship might allow. Teacher candidates must be given opportunities to discover both the danger and the promise of being

disruptive and teaching students to disrupt. They must be aware that they cannot control how, if, or when students fully intend to their lived-experience. Despite that uncertainty, teacher candidates must come to understand how to create the pedagogical space in which their students will be able to leverage the full aesthetic and humanizing potential of the arts.

Teaching can no longer be done in isolation and teachers' efforts should concern ways that they can expand teaching beyond the art room, the studio, or the school. It is not enough to be a transformative, socially-just or antioppressive teacher if those humanizing efforts end at the classroom door. Instead, teacher candidates need to be exposed to the influence antioppressive teaching can have on their peers, their future colleagues, parents, and policymakers. Intending to the work that teaching can do in the world— supporting the authorship of their students lived experiences, for example— will promote the transformation of schooling itself towards a more just system in which students inherit neither wisdom nor a pre-made world, but make, unmake, and remake the world as the unquestioned authors of their own experience.

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